

# THE MAKING OF A NEW ZEALANDER

**ALAN MULGAN**



THIS is the life-story of a New Zealander who was born in the Ulster settlement of Katikati in the Bay of Plenty, who remembers the Tarawera Eruption of 1886, and who has attained an honoured position in the life and letters of his land.

Alan Mulgan has been a journalist for nearly 60 years and a writer of books for about 40. In this account of a long and active life he ranges far beyond his own career to give a social and political commentary on New Zealand's progress from colonial status to responsible partnership in the United Nations. It passes from horse-coach to jet aircraft, from horned phonograph to radiogram, and from the reign of the chaperon to easy friendship between the sexes.

The book reflects his breadth of experience in Press, radio and authorship—reporting in the *Auckland Star*; some years on the *Christchurch Press*; back to the *Star* as Literary Editor and leader-writer; appointment as the first Supervisor of Talks in the New Zealand Broadcasting Service; and the succession of books that he has had published over the years (see back flap). Since his retirement Alan Mulgan has become well-known to radio listeners as a broadcaster and writer of scripts. He has been president of the New Zealand P.E.N. and received the O.B.E. for services to journalism, broadcasting and literature.

Alan Mulgan knows New Zealand well, loves her and is increasingly fascinated by her variations. His book reflects the experiences of a New Zealander who has known a wide range of his countrymen, who has worked in the thick of things, and who has found nothing uninteresting. It is a story of individual and collective change in an island race which used to regard itself largely as a transplanted British community, but which has acquired a strength of purpose and progress in its nationhood. From this awareness of maturity comes Mr. Mulgan's title for the book—*The Making of a New Zealander*.

M.J.  
Hanna



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NEW ZEALANDER







The Author.

*Cecil Manson, photograph.*

ALAN MULGAN

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New Zealander



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To the memory of a New Zealander,  
Lieutenant-Colonel John Alan Mulgan,  
M.C. Born Christchurch, New Zealand,  
1911; died 1945; Oxford and Bucking-  
hamshire Light Infantry; Royal West  
Kent Regiment; Force 133, Occupied  
Greece.

It seemed to me, meeting them again, friends grown a little older, more self-assured, hearing again those soft, inflected voices, the repetitions of slow, drawling slang, that perhaps to have produced these men for this one time would be New Zealand's destiny. Everything that was good from that small, remote country had gone into them—sunshine and strength, good sense, patience, the versatility of practical men. And they marched into history.

*Report on Experience*, by John Mulgan.



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THIS BOOK is an expansion of twenty-four talks given over stations of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service. I take this opportunity of thanking the Service, and especially my friend and then chief, Sir James Shelley, for giving me this means of telling my story.

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I would also thank Mrs. Olive Goldie, widow of the artist, and the University of Auckland, which possesses the original, for permission to reproduce the portrait of Sir Maurice O'Rorke, by C. F. Goldie; Miss Dawn Matthews and Mrs. June Stewart, daughters of M. Matthews, for permission to use their father's etching of the Auckland Grammar School building in Symonds St.; and Mr. W. H. Cooper, headmaster of the Auckland Grammar School, for a photograph of the staff.

A.M.

*Wellington, New Zealand.*

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## *Chapter One*

### FRONTIER BACKGROUND

*Child of Irish Immigrants—Transplanted Victorianism—When the Chaperon Reigned—A Six-day Week—Memories of Tauranga—The Tarawera Eruption—Black Darkness in Daytime—A Frontier of the British Army—Journalism with a Bite.*

**T**HIS STORY OF MINE is of a New Zealander who was born in New Zealand and has lived all his life in this country, save for a few months in England and a short visit to Australia. I tell it because it is thought to have interest as a record of a New Zealander's development, and of changes in the society in which he has lived.

My story is of a boy reared among elders who had been born in what everybody called the Old Country, or Home. In their particular case, Home was Ulster. These elders accepted New Zealand more or less cheerfully as their new home, and became New Zealanders—again more or less. They could not become New Zealanders in the sense that their children did, and still more their grandchildren. The tradition of the Old Country, the Irish-English tradition, was too strong. They worked in New Zealand and some of them did fairly well for themselves. All achieved a certain amount of happiness. The pull of the Homeland, however, was always there to influence their actions, colour their thoughts, and point their convictions and prejudices. Herbert Guthrie-Smith, who wrote the New Zealand classic *Tutira*, himself a Scot educated in England, accused New Zealanders of the seventies, who were mostly persons of the Old Country, of trying to turn New Zealand into a sixth-rate Britain. Our own native plants and birds were held to be unworthy of us. "It was given out and widely accepted that the former were of no great beauty, that inevitably the latter must perish. The very Maori race was represented as doomed. Our forests were undervalued, their yearly growth underestimated, their hardihood denied."

New Zealand born, I had my early impressions formed in this transplanted society. I would not say my elders went so far as Guthrie-Smith's attribution, but there was a touch of it in their attitude. Whatever was English, or Irish-English, was better. As

I grew older I corrected many of those impressions. I learned the history of my own country, New Zealand, and I came to know most of its landscape, from Kaitaia to Invercargill, absorbed its atmosphere, its flavour, its character. I was never persuaded that New Zealand could afford to cast adrift from the Mother Country, either in politics or in culture, but I began to realize that New Zealand was different, that it must stand on its own feet, and, no doubt with help, make its own path through the uncertain woods of destiny. It has its own sights and sounds and scents; its own streams and hills, trees and birds; its own raging seas; its own legends and folk-lore; its own way of looking at the problems of life; its own soul. It fell to my lot to describe the features of my own country, and to record its history. I tried to interpret its spirit, but with changes of view as the years passed and experience widened. Eventually I became, so I believe, a New Zealander in outlook as well as by birth. I am not, however, a typical New Zealander in every respect. I am somewhat lacking in resource and handiness. Though I did some farm work as a boy, and have knocked about in small boats and camped in tents, my unhandiness has been rather a joke in the family. I would not have made a good soldier. But I feel myself to be a New Zealander, and I saw the generations grow up who won fame in two world wars.

The second development to be illustrated in this narrative is, of course, infinitely more important. It is that of New Zealand life—its manners, its work and play, its social and political character, its standing in the world. I remember a society in which a telephone was a curiosity; there were none in the country settlement of my childhood. I remember the first gramophone, or rather phonograph, brought round as an astonishing entertainment. In the cities there were gas lights with naked flames, and kerosene lamps and candles in every country home and many town ones. There were bearded men and tightly corseted women, and skirts that swept the ground. I recollect my first sight of a shorter skirt. It was a garment for hockey, and it showed the ankles. Grandmothers subsided peacefully and without a murmur into middle age at forty. Men wore stiff white shirts and stiff high collars. There were plenty of women to do the ironing.

The chaperon reigned. She watched the dancers, and had the privilege of being first in to supper. Women did not go about with men unattended, or if they did, they were supposed to be engaged. Even with an engaged pair a chaperon might be considered necessary, and if a man danced much with one girl there

was talk. Women did not travel alone if it could be helped, or eat in public by themselves. Indeed, except hotels, there were few eating-places. The Victorian idea of a man as a predatory animal lingered on the social scene. Immigrants from Britain changed their skies, but by no means all their conventions, so Victorian ideals reigned in many things, from social etiquette to the "subject picture".

Musical evenings and drawing-room games were popular means of entertainment. For the simple reason that it was much harder to get out, and there were fewer public attractions, people were more stay-at-home, and found their amusements there, either by themselves or in the company of friends. At musical evenings the Victorian ballad was queen. In my grandfather's household in Katikati secular songs for Sunday evenings were slightly frowned upon. A magic-lantern show was a treat. Every woman who rode used a side-saddle. And New Zealand was a British colony, under the Colonial Office. There was little or no thought of a change of status.

There was legislation making it compulsory for shops to close early and give their assistants a half-holiday a week. The law was denounced as an infringement of liberty, and defiance was talked of and perhaps to some extent carried out. But before William Pember Reeves, our first Minister of Labour, got this measure through, many shop assistants were working from eight in the morning till nine at night five days a week, and from eight in the morning till eleven at night on Saturdays. Commenting at breakfast on the national budget introduced the evening before, one of my uncles exclaimed: "They're going to borrow a million! Lord help the country!" This uncle lived until 1946, and saw the National Debt stand at over £600,000,000. By that time economically, culturally and in its association with Britain, New Zealand was a very different country. When my uncle spoke, you could buy mutton in Auckland for a penny a pound.

My first clear recollection of an outside event is of the Tarawera eruption in 1886. I was five years old and living in Tauranga, the mother town of the settlement of Katikati, where I was born. Tauranga was on one of the routes to Rotorua, forty miles away. One night in June an area blew up that included a side of the 3770-foot Mt Tarawera. Millions of tons of rock, mud and ash were ejected, and wind carried the lighter material far over the country-side. In Tauranga it was a night of distant noises and earthquakes; then came a saffron-coloured dawn; and about eight o'clock a darkness blacker than the darkest night enveloped the

town, caused by the drift of fine-as-flour volcanic dust. The situation was terrifying, but not without its humour. A prominent churchwoman was reported as saying: "The Last Day has come, and there's no steamer to take us away!" The darkness passed and the next day was blue, with a big white cloud in the direction of Rotorua—steam from the mangled earth. My father took me for a drive some miles out and we passed sheep being driven from dust-covered pastures. Some of them ate the poisonous tutu by the roadside and died. I can still see the body of a collapsing sheep. Very few people can have actually seen the burst of the eruption. One was Alfred Warbrick, for many years the leading guide in the Rotorua district. From his bush camp not very far away Warbrick saw the mountain split. On the anniversary of the tragedy fifty years later, as Supervisor of Talks for the Broadcasting Service, I arranged a talk by him.

Tauranga, which I was to visit at intervals in my teens, was a beautiful little town, and is still beautiful, though more sophisticated. It has the sea on two sides, and across the smaller inlet lies Otumoetai, one of the loveliest of place-names in the full-vowelled Maori tongue. The name, so I was to learn many years later from James Cowan, means "Full tide asleep", which recalls Tennyson's "such a tide as moving seems asleep, too full for sound and foam". Tauranga wears the print of war with the Maori; the site of the Gate Pa battle; graves in the mission cemetery; and the Monmouth Redoubt, called after the 43rd Monmouthshire Light Infantry and preserved as a memorial. The Mission House, "The Elms", stands as it did a century ago, rich in relics. When I was a child the grass in that locality bore plainly the circular marks of military tents. That there was little or no talk of such things among my elders was a factor in my bringing-up to which I shall refer.

It may be that even then I was injected with a dose of printer's ink. The history of the *Bay of Plenty Times*, of which my father was editor, illustrates the fact that New Zealand has been extraordinarily prolific in newspapers. In the middle period they grew like grass in spring, till this country had more newspapers in proportion to population than any other. It was so easy to start a paper of sorts; city papers took a long time to arrive; and local affairs aroused keen interest and, indeed, passion. Joseph Ivess, irreverently known as the "Champion Rag-planter", started twenty-five in Australia and New Zealand. In the first seventeen years of the *Bay of Plenty Times*, eight others were born in this little frontier town, and either failed or were absorbed. In spite

of the tameness of newspaper life compared with "Journalism in Tennessee", Mark Twain would have felt at home in those dingy little wooden country offices, where the smell of ink blended with whiffs of pioneering, and at night the editor perhaps worked by the light of a guttering candle.

Listen to the *Times* (not in my father's day, I think) admonishing Captain Morris, local Member of Parliament and late of the Royal Marines: "For God's sake do something. Hiccough, blow your nose in a manner to draw the attention of the House. It's your never-ending solemn silence that aggravates."

In such a place there was no power plant to worry about. It is doubtful if electricity was used anywhere in New Zealand to drive machinery: internal combustion had not been invented; and steam was too expensive. The flat-bed printing machine was turned by hand. Among the little peaks of memory of those childhood days is a picture of a Maori boy turning the "mangle" that printed the *Bay of Plenty Times*. The big Hoe rotary presses of the *Auckland Star* lay in the unimagined future.

## *Chapter Two*

### ULSTER PLANTATION

*Vesey Stewart's Choice of a Site—Voyages in the Seventies—Pioneering the Katikati Wilderness—Economic Difficulties—Sense of Brotherhood—Waihi Gold Eases Pressure—Prosperity Through Dairying—Fine Picture of Success.*

KATIKATI, a plantation from Ulster, or Northern Ireland, was founded by an Irishman, George Vesey Stewart, commonly known as Vesey. He also established a community at Te Puke, near Tauranga, and these were the last of New Zealand's special settlements. Naturally our smaller special settlements have been overshadowed by the larger—Wellington, Canterbury, Otago, New Plymouth and Nelson—but they have an individuality and romance of their own that should not be overlooked. We should remember the Midland townsfolk who were dumped down on poor land in the Kaipara district, and might have starved but for the fish they caught; the men and women from the real Bohemia who took up bush country at Puhoi and did not see a horse for ten years, and in some homes were glad to eat the pith of the nikau palm; the Scandinavians at Norsewood, Dannevirke and Palmerston North, among whom children were taken away from school because sixpence a week could not be found; and that moonbeam from the larger lunacy of immigration-settlement, the communities at Martin's Bay and Jackson's Bay in South Westland, places that remained inaccessible for decades. George Vesey Stewart had a good look round New Zealand before he chose his site, and he took Katikati because he fell in love with the terrain.

Riding out from Tauranga, he saw rolling fern and tea-tree country, well watered by rivers, a crescent of blue forested hills behind, and in front the indenting sea, with the length of Mata-kana Island sheltering it from the ocean. The site of Katikati was a remote wilderness. If it is asked why, in a country so sparsely populated, settlers were placed in such spots, the answer lies mainly in the topography of New Zealand, a long land largely up on end. Forests covered much of the landscape. The Maori owned much of the North Island and a good deal of the more

open land had already been taken up, often in big holdings. After the large-scale early colonizations, settlement was apt to be spasmodic. It did not advance in a regular line. Often settlers went right out into the wilds and had to wait long for reasonably good communications. This partly explains the importance of the "roads and bridges member" in the New Zealand Parliament, a term that has well-nigh disappeared. One might laugh at him and deplore his preoccupation with local matters, but road or bridge could be life or death to an outback settler. The central Government was the main source of bounty, so grants were continually asked for.

There was method as well as emotion in Vesey Stewart's choice. He had laid down three conditions: first-class land easy to clear; access to a town; and proximity to goldfields, which would provide a market; and he thought he had all these in Katikati. He was somewhat mistaken. The land was not first-class, and Vesey could not know that comparatively little is in New Zealand. Tauranga was a small place and far from Auckland. The gold-bearing Coromandel Range, which ran down from Cape Colville to Katikati, gave only shadowy promise of a neighbouring field. However, within a few years gold was found at Waihi, not far from the northern end of the Katikati block, and the Waihi or Martha became one of the great mines of the world.

Vesey Stewart, one of the landed-gentry class in Ulster, was an exceptionally able man, strong in body and mind, determined, imaginative, fluent, persuasive, and resourceful. He could persuade almost anybody of anything, and draw tears from a statue. Of his faults, the historian of Katikati, A. J. Gray, says that "above all, he lacked the supreme quality of leadership, the capacity to win devotion. Despite his manner and obvious talents, he made associates rather than friends." All his life he was the centre of controversy, but when Gray says "many less able men have sat round the Cabinet table", he is perhaps putting it mildly. At this point I acknowledge warmly my debt to my friend Mr Gray for information taken from his history, *An Ulster Plantation*, to which I was privileged to write an introduction. At Trinity College, Dublin, Vesey Stewart took honours in classics and won prizes in French, German and Spanish. When he came to negotiate with the New Zealand Government and the Auckland Provincial Government for his land settlement, a difficult and tedious business, he was helped by the fact that the Minister of Lands and Immigration in Wellington was also a Trinity College man—George Maurice O'Rorke, afterwards Speaker of the House.

These "two kindred spirits" settled the details "over a warm fire and a convivial bottle". Learning is not the only benefit to be obtained from a famous university. Leaving Trinity, Vesey settled down as a farmer, estate agent and country gentleman. He had been advised that he would do much better "in the colonies", and when his affairs became involved he resolved to emigrate. This was to be something much more than an individual adventure. He would plant a colony and rule it in patriarchal fashion. The emigrants would consist of country gentlemen like himself to provide capital and congenial social atmosphere, and tenant farmers. Stewart, however, pictured the farmers as owners, and insisted that all of them should take out some capital. There was something of Edward Gibbon Wakefield in Stewart. Altogether he brought out 4000 persons to New Zealand.

So Vesey Stewart made up two parties, 1875 and 1878, gentry and farmers, and he included the Orange Lodges in his recruitment. A Wakefield touch may be noted in the fact that he began to invite applications before he had obtained his land. There were two generals, a major, four captains, and three clergymen of what for convenience I may call the Anglican Church. His own father was one of the captains, and Captain Hugh Stewart of the Royal Artillery, who, with his wife Adela made "Athenree" one of the most attractive homes in Katikati, was a brother. As is the way with promoters of emigration, Vesey painted a glowing picture of the promised land. Would he include his own parents if he was not sure the venture would be a success? My grandparents were divided between the parties. The Rev. W. E. Mulgan was rector of Donagh in County Antrim, where he raised a family of eight, one of whom stayed behind, on ninety pounds a year and a glebe farm. He employed a labourer at ten shillings a week and a cottage, and this man and his wife emigrated with the family.

As in many another household in Britain and Ireland, the future of the children must have been a factor in the decision. My grandfather was another Trinity College man, and a fine classical scholar. He lacked ambition, and I should say took things rather easily, but he was wise in counsel, respected, and loved. This advice of his, though not, I believe, original, was characteristic: "Before you say anything about anybody, ask yourself these questions: 'Is it true, is it wise, is it kind?'" With his sturdy frame, silvery white hair and beard, fine head and benevolent expression, he was the most venerable-looking man I have ever seen. He has a niche in New Zealand history as a member of the University

Commission of 1879. It is not surprising that he was Vesey Stewart's right-hand man in the first party.

My mother's father had become a friend of grandfather Mulgan at Trinity College. The Rev. Walter Johnston, commonly known in Katikati as the Canon (from a position he had held in Ireland), was rector of Connor in Antrim, and owner of Fort Johnston in Monaghan. The Johnstons came originally from the Scottish border. He and my grandmother and a large family (my grandmother had fifteen children altogether) sailed in the second party. I did not know the Mulgans as Katikati settlers. I went to the township school for three years while my father was in charge of it, and the Johnston home "Hillside", on the slopes of Hikurangi opposite Bowentown Heads, was my second home then and during later holidays from Auckland. "Hillside" and its surroundings (the farm went down to the Tuapiro River) gave me my deepest and most lasting impressions of Katikati. I chose "Hillside" for the scene of my narrative poem *Golden Wedding*, but the people in it are of my imagining.

The emigrants voyaged in the clipper ship's brief period of glory. The *Carisbrook Castle*, which carried the first party, was 1400 tons, whereas the pioneers of 1840, 1848 and 1850 came in ships of about 500 tons. The *Lady Jocelyn*, which brought the second, was a particularly fine ship of over 2000 tons. She once ran from Melbourne to London in 67½ days. This time she made Auckland in 92 days, in one twenty-four hours covered 360 miles, and for five consecutive days logged nearly 300 miles. She carried a crew of seventy-four, for in those days, before steam became a serious competitor, clippers were well manned. As was customary, the voyages were non-stop. Helped by the fact that they were bound together by common origin and interests, the voyagers were, on the whole, happy communities. There were schools for the children, concerts and dances. The *Lady Jocelyn* produced a newspaper. There were more of the gentry among her 378 passengers, and therefore more money to spend. Every festive occasion was an excuse for opening champagne and making speeches. New Zealand's liking for, or toleration of, speeches seems to have been an importation, and is not just in the local air, though this may have nourished it to an unexpected degree, as it has done with blackberry, gorse and rabbits.

For some, however, the voyages must have been anything but a joy. My grandmother, Mrs Johnston, lost her infant at sea. She was to give birth to her fourteenth child shortly after she reached New Zealand, and day after day in her diary there is a pathetic

short entry about sickness. She could have taken little pleasurable part in the social life. She had a good cabin in one of the best of ships, and family and servants to help her. I think of the state of mothers similarly conditioned and perhaps also bereaved, in the 'tween-decks of smaller ships. If there was a hell there, it was for the women rather than the men. My fifty-year-long memory of my grandmother is of a short stout woman in a long black dress and a white lace cap; I never saw her in anything else. She was unselfish to a fault, and uncomplaining in facing the hardships of pioneering life after the smooth routine of life in Ireland. I have never known a woman with a sweeter nature, and I feel sure that this serenity (without weakness) helped her to live into her ninety-eighth year. Three years before she died she held my first grandchild on her knee.

The disappointment of the first party at the sight of their future home may have been sharpened by their having been feted in Auckland and received with a gun salute by the Armed Constabulary in Tauranga. The only road to the block was a rough track that ended at the southern boundary. To get to their sections many of them would have to travel by water, so they hired cutters to take them to riverside landings, and lived in raupo whares till their homes were built. The second party, arriving three years later, might not have agreed with Vesey's interim declaration that if there was a paradise on earth it was Katikati, but they found something accomplished. All the immigrants were to find that Katikati was neither a paradise nor an El Dorado. Yet at the outset Vesey's promises appeared to have some solid basis, for the first yields from the burned-off land were very heavy. One settler wrote joyfully that he had grown potatoes half a pound in weight and oats seven and a half feet high. Unfortunately this largesse was not maintained. The second-year crops were poorer and the deterioration continued. The explanation was that they had used up natural manure formed by decaying fern and ash of the burnings. They had to learn how to handle this land by assiduous cultivation, use of fertilizers, and choice of suitable grasses.

In that climate trees grew more quickly than in Ireland, and it was not long before homes and gardens were enclosed in the sheltering pines that are such a feature of the New Zealand rural landscape. Some of the homes of the gentry were excellent examples of good colonial architecture, pleasant to the eye with their gables and creeper-covered verandas, and agreeably furnished. Such names as "Mt Stewart" (the leader's home), "Athenree", "Castle Grace", "Woodlands", "Larkspur", "Jes-

mond" and "Claremont", carry a flavour of the class that built them. By the time I was old enough to take notice, there was a road through from Tauranga to Waihi and Paeroa, where you took a small ship to Auckland, or you might go by sea from Tauranga. A smaller ship, driven by a puffing-billy engine, and manned by two men, plied for years with passengers and goods between Katikati township and Tauranga through tortuous channels, marked in places by tea-tree sticks. In the early days there was traffic in open boats. The Johnston girls as well as the boys so travelled the twenty miles to Tauranga and back, and I did so myself in the nineties. It is a harbour of mud-flats, and if you were caught on one on a falling tide you might be stranded for hours. To get out and push on a dark night was an eerie experience, especially if you thought of stingarees. At one time a compensation for boat journeys was that you could land at Matakana Island and pick bushels of peaches. They were so plentiful that it was worth going over specially from "Hillside" for a load. Perhaps missionaries planted the trees; perhaps Maoris. Those were the happy days before brown-rot and leaf-curl appeared.

This enclosed tidal seascape gave me a deep and lasting conception of my country. To a South Islander, New Zealand may suggest first, tussock land and the Alps. To me it is primarily an Auckland tidal harbour and a clay cutting near the sea on a hot day, with accompaniment by cicadas.

The basic trouble of the settlement was what was common in new lands; you can produce, but it is less easy to sell. It was the sheep-farmer who saved New Zealand in the early days, because he could turn out his sheep on more or less virgin country and sell his product abroad. He was backed by the wheat-farmer. Unfortunately Katikati was not sheep country, nor has it ever grown much wheat, so the question was, where were the customers for the turnips and cabbages even if they grew as large as Vesey had promised? Tauranga was twenty miles away, a small town with limited needs. Auckland was much farther away. You had to ship produce to Tauranga, and then ship it there for the city, and Auckland was served by farms much closer.

My father's experience was very significant. Young, strong and energetic, he tried to farm his father's land. The old man, naturally enough, had given it up and gone to Auckland to take a parish. My father had great hopes of sending butter to Auckland, but when he had paid two freights and the auctioneer's commission, there was not much left out of the fivepence a pound he received.

This was near the middle of New Zealand's first great depression, perhaps the worst it has known. In the mid-eighties more people were leaving New Zealand than came in. Seeing no prospects in farming, and with a wife and child to keep, he moved to Tauranga, worked in a store, edited the *Bay of Plenty Times*, and finally became a teacher, which meant that he had to start at the bottom again. After doing in Katikati the three years' country service required, he moved to Auckland, took his university degree, and only twelve years after starting as a probationer was appointed an Inspector of Schools.

Some others left. There were misfits in this as in every other settlement, men quite unfitted for a rough farming life. Some of them had more money than was good for them. Others had enough private means to keep going fairly comfortably, and their money nourished the settlement. There is a nice story of General Stoddart. Katikati was given a telegraph office on condition that a certain amount of business was put through, so the General would ride or drive down from "Claremont" every week and send a number of telegrams. Some of the less fortunate supplemented what they could get off the land by making roads and building bridges for the Government, working for the better-off, or taking jobs in saw-mills. Thomas Mulvaney has a line in New Zealand history as one of the pioneers of bee-keeping, but it was not a success. A cheese factory was started in the eighties, but it had to close down. The most piquant enterprise—though I think this was later, when times were less hard—was that of the vicar, the Rev. W. J. Katterns. What Mr Katterns's stipend was I never knew, but I doubt if he was passing rich. So he ran an ostrich farm. The last of his ostriches were hunted down in a river-bed in the early days of the first world war.

Life, however, was very simple. It was not considered necessary to go to town often; indeed, the journey was difficult. Poverty and isolation were mitigated by the community sense that belongs to such a special settlement. Everyone knew everyone else, and one helped another. I helped on many harvesting days at "Hillside", but I remember little paid labour. Neighbours lent a hand and the Johnston boys went to them in turn. Socially there were class distinctions, but not on the harvest field. A basic difference between life in England and in New Zealand was expressed by a doctor's wife who emigrated to Nelson with a large family in the forties: "We can here afford one thing, which no one in England can do; we can afford to be poor."

The first economic lift came when the Waihi mine developed

on the other side of the ranges, about ten miles from the northern end of the settlement. Twenty-four millions in gold and silver came from that mine. I remember Waihi when it was one dingy street of raw-looking houses, with dust in summer and mud in winter. Gold brought population, and for some years everything had to be carried to the township by horse. Horses needed food and so did humans, and the surrounding country looked as if it would not support a rabbit. Today it is dotted with dairy-farms. This was Katikati's opportunity. Farmers went to Waihi with loaded drays and waggons, a long day for some of them from dawn to dusk. The roads in winter were a trial. Local bodies were poor and road metal scarce. Mud has been a substantial factor in New Zealand life. It has cost Members of Parliament their seats and perhaps unmade Ministries. At "Hillside" there was as much talk of the state of the long hill leading out of the gorge to the Waihi plain as there was of politics. Today a car or lorry covers the miles between Katikati and Waihi in under an hour, and a generation has arisen—especially in the towns—that does not know what a really bad road is like.

Vesey lived to see a greater prosperity. Dairying for export, the greatest New Zealand economic development of this century, brought wealth to Katikati. Good dairy-farming can make poor land yield a profit, and much of what has been brought in for this purpose is poorer than Katikati's hill slopes and river-flats. I last saw Katikati on a summer day in 1944, and I thought again what a wonderful change had come over the place that is dearer to me than any. The slopes from the blue hills to the sea were patterned with small farms, and dotted with houses in their settings of trees and gardens. The sea was a shimmering blue, and the view out to Matakana Island and away to Mt Maunganui seemed lovelier than ever. On my grandfather's property of some 500 acres there were seven separate farms, and there was still land to bring in. There was a mellowness about the settlement that enhanced its former beauty: not only a lovely spot, but a fine picture of success.

As Vesey grew old, grievances were forgotten. He was the most important guest at the annual agricultural show, greeted on all sides with respect and affection, and when he replied to the toast of "The Founder", he would tell them that every promise he had made had been amply redeemed, and every fear had proved to be an impostor. He was eighty-seven when he died and had worked to the end. His last recorded words had to do with returned soldiers and the railway that was coming.

### *Chapter Three*

## BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

*Twelfth of July—Orange Lodge and Catholic Publican—Concerts, Dances and Games—Cadets at Play—Strong Links with “Home”—Weak Sense of Local History—Striking of New Roots—A Bird “Better than the Nightingale”—New Memories for New Generations.*

SUCH WAS THE MATERIAL GROWTH of this Ulster plantation in New Zealand. Its social tone was that of a British community transplanted into a freer world. Recruited largely from the Orange Lodges of Ulster, Katikati was emphatically a Protestant settlement. There was an Orange Lodge, which had its headquarters in the one hall. On or about the 12th of July, Lodge members would parade in the glory of their sashes for service in the Anglican Church, and I well remember the impression a small boy got from that processional splash of colour on the tea-tree-lined country road. Yet the one or two Roman Catholic families in Katikati suffered not one whit on account of their religion. Barney MacDonnell, who kept the hotel, was a Catholic. Over six feet high and weighing twenty stone, he was both a chucker-out and a diplomat, whose advice was sought by many. Ministers of all churches passing through Katikati were given free lodging and a room to hold the service in. Gray tells how one Orangeman protested against the inconsistency of buying from a Catholic the liquor for the annual celebrations. Barney prevented further complaint by sending the Lodge half a dozen bottles of whisky as a present. Old passions cooled a little in the freer colonial atmosphere.

Community amusements were concerts and dances, meetings of the Mutual Improvement Society, and football and cricket. There is a lot of Victorian atmosphere and history in that name—Mutual Improvement Society. It was really a debating society, and my one memory of it is a debate on Home Rule. The concerts would be songs and recitations, perhaps action songs by the school children or a Christy Minstrel show, then a farce, followed by a dance. The music? “Sultan’s Grand March” on the piano, “Fiddle and I”, “Tom Bowling”, “The British Lion”, “White

"Wings", "The Bridge", "Waiting", "Robin Adair", "Home Sweet Home". A faded newspaper report says the singing of "Home Sweet Home" brought tears to the eyes of many.

Formal dances in the small hall began about eight, and in summer at any rate, went on till dawn. What was the good of going home in the dark when you were having a good time, and when few vehicles had lights? The music was piano by itself. My grandmother, Mrs Johnston, used to provide nearly all of it. She played hour after hour. There were more waltzes than anything else, but the Lancers were very popular.

At those dances there was never anything stronger than claret-cup to drink. Someone may have had a nip of hard liquor on the quiet, but I never saw a sign of it. For a man to drink at dances, or to come smelling of drink, was bad form. Tea was made from water boiled in kerosene tins on an open fire outside. I can still smell that tea-tree fire in the mystery of a velvet summer night. Unless it is the odour of crushed bush fern, no smell is so nostalgic to a New Zealander as that of burning tea-tree—especially the dry heads. "Scents are stronger than sounds or sights to make the heart-strings crack." When my son John was at Oxford we sent him a small parcel of tea-tree heads, and he gathered a number of other New Zealanders to enjoy the ritual of putting it on the fire and savouring the thrilling scent of home.

Cricket was played in a grass paddock. A good man with a scythe could cut very close, but I don't know whether a scythe was used. I feel certain there was not a lawn-mower in the settlement. The wicket must have deserved the adjective that a fellow reporter of mine used about a football ground—vituperative. You either hit the ball high into the outfield or collected singles painfully. The smell of oiled bats comes down to me sweetly from the time I was a boy of eight or nine. My father was a fair batsman and the only bowler I have ever seen who bowled the true round-arm position; his arm was quite horizontal. He must have learned his cricket at his Irish schools (Portora and Armagh) in the last days of the strongly defended old style. Some years later I played for Katikati on a matting-concrete wicket, with fern almost up to the pitch. I cut a poor figure fielding; to run for a catch with feet entangled is an uncomfortable experience. Truly, as Swinburne says, "ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot."

Of football I remember little, but when I began to go to school in Katikati there was an older boy named David Gallaher—the David Gallaher who captained the first fully representative side

in Britain, the original "All Blacks"—and died a soldier's death in the first world war. In sport, Katikati also produced a champion axeman. But, as Gray says, the most distinguished son of Katikati—though like Charles Macmillan (later Minister of Agriculture) and David Gallaher, he was not born there—was H. D. A. Major, of whom New Zealanders have heard little. Henry Major graduated at Auckland University College, entered the Anglican Church, went to England, and became principal of the theological training college of Ripon Hall, and one of the leaders of the Broad Church Party.

I write particularly of "Hillside" in the older days when all or most of the family were there, and everybody came home for Christmas and some of them brought their friends. As many as twenty-five people sat down to dinner on Christmas Day. In spite of the fact that it was summer there would be plum-pudding surrounded by holly and brandy burning in the dish; and always one toast, "Absent Friends". The thoughts of all the elders went across the world to "Home". There were family prayers every morning, and service every Sunday evening. The old man pottered round his garden, always wearing a long square-cut frock-coat; took snuff; and loved his game of whist of an evening. Every visitor who could play was roped in for a game. The younger ones preferred euchre and round-the-table games like "Hands Up, Jenkins!", and music round the piano. There were the beforementioned Victorian ballads to sing, with Stephen Adams and F. E. Weatherly as chief purveyors.

For you, for you, my darling,  
I spoke those words untrue,  
I left you though I loved you,  
And broke my heart for you.

Does any one remember now a Stephen Adams song called "Mona"? I once listened to a really serious discussion at "Hillside" as to what really happened to Mona. Tom Mulvaney, whom I have mentioned as a pioneer in bees, declared that if Mona really died, he never wanted to hear the song again. It struck me then, young as I was, and it has often struck me since, how lugubrious were most of those songs. Somebody was always parting from somebody else. Why? Possibly because divorce was so difficult, but a friend has suggested it may have been partly the sustained emigration from Britain, which took away so many of the eligible men.

Despite difficulties, the Johnstons visited neighbours frequently,

and their neighbours visited them. People dropped in all the time. Hospitality was the primal law. My grandmother's diary of the earlier years shows that nearly every week a friend or relation arrived, or one of the family visited someone. Sometimes complete strangers turned in from the main road and were given a dinner and a bed. This did not matter so much to the house-keeper as it would now, for there were many hands to do the work. It is the farmer's wife without help who has cause to bless the casual caller. At Christmas time, while the house was full, there were picnics, perhaps by boat, and dances. A day at home was no hardship, with perhaps a book in a hammock under the trees, and peaches to eat, and creek pools to bathe in. This applied mostly to the women. The work of the farm went on, and men visitors were roped into it.

Mention of dances reminds me of the cadets. Some one should make a study of that colonial institution, the farm cadet, for socially and economically he is a picturesque figure in our history. The old system was to pay a premium to a farmer, generally a sheep-farmer, to teach the young fellow how to farm. On a good sheep-station this might work well. The cadet lived with the boss and got to know not only the routine but something of the inner working of a property. Socially these young chaps were considered desirable. They had been brought up in a tradition of good manners, and played games and danced well. On one well-known sheep-station in Canterbury, it was the rule (and probably on others) that the cadets should dress for dinner every evening. The owner believed this kept them from growing slack away from the discipline of towns, and shall we say he was wrong? Naturally, however, the cadet system lent itself to abuse. The farmer did better than get labour for nothing; he was paid to employ it. A father in England might know little or nothing of a farmer in New Zealand to whom he was entrusting his son. Nowadays a cadet is paid a small wage to begin with.

The Katikati cadet system was mostly a joke. There were three or four at "Athenree", the most attractive of Katikati homes. Gray says Captain Hugh Stewart at least made them work, and remembering the Captain, I can believe it. However, the Captain himself was learning to farm, and nowhere in Katikati was the standard of farming really high. At "Mt Stewart", Vesey Stewart maintained a company of cadets—or rather they helped to maintain him. It was part of his programme. For a premium of one hundred and fifty guineas a year he offered to take young men of good family, teach them the elements of colonial farming, and

place them on farms of their own. I read that Vesey had as many as twenty cadets at "Mt Stewart". Whether it was twenty altogether, or twenty at a time, I do not know, but even twenty all told, at a hundred and fifty guineas a year each, makes a tidy total of money. Some of them were men who had failed for their army examinations. Some, perhaps, had been more than a handful for their parents. Vesey built a wing of his house for them, with a ball-room and a billiard-room. I visited the house several times after its gay days and noticed the built-in seats in the billiard-room. There was no billiard-table then, but there were bags of onions and odds and ends lying about. The cadets learned little or no farming. Who was there to teach them? Certainly not Vesey, immersed in affairs. However, the cadets enjoyed themselves. Those high-spirited youngsters, always out for a lark, were excellent company at picnics and dances, and it was not very far to the Katikati hotel.

English-mail day, once a month, was an event. It was a joy to me to be allowed to ride down for the mail. Letters came to settlers with news of relatives and friends left behind, of life in a deep-founded and well-ordered society; letters with remittances—and letters without. In family circles there were scrambles for English papers and periodicals—*Punch* and the *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News*, the *Boys' Own Paper* and the *Girls' Own Paper*. The *Boys' Own*, I may say, was rather more popular among the girls than the *Girls' Own*.

For many years Katikati was isolated. To get out was a bit of an adventure. One party took twenty hours to go from "Athenree" to Tauranga, thirty-five miles. There was little money for travel. Society was remote and self-contained. It was far away from Auckland, and much farther from Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. Indeed, Belfast and London were closer to the Katikati settler than our southern cities. He had seen Belfast, and if he had not seen London he had a pretty clear idea what it was like, whereas he had not seen our south and had only a shadowy picture of it. In those days London, presented to me in books and pictures, was much more vivid to me than any New Zealand town except Auckland, which was my home after the age of nine. Also, I think, in that little community, English politics loomed larger than New Zealand. At any rate I do not remember many discussions about New Zealand affairs. The immigrants brought their politics with them. To most, I should say, Gladstone was the villain of the piece, and Salisbury the saviour of his country and the Empire. When Britain and France came

to a sharp disagreement over Fashoda, after Kitchener's conquest of the Sudan, some one said: "Thank God, Salisbury's there!"

There was a good deal of reading. Some of the homes had excellent collections of books, and there was a public library. The books read were decorous. Thomas Hardy's *Tess*, I imagine, was not approved, and if a copy of *Jude the Obscure* came into a settlement, it must have been kept hidden.

"We asked no social questions—we pumped no hidden shame. We never talked obstetrics when the little stranger came." We liked adventure and happy endings. A new novel by Stanley Weyman caused excitement. Those were the days of the Colonial Edition of new novels—2s. 6d. paper cover, 3s. 6d. cloth. Our neighbours at "Athenree" had discovered another new writer, Rudyard Kipling, and it was the son of the house, Mervyn Stewart, who introduced him to me. Mervyn was a single-taxer, the first I met. When Dick Seddon, Premier of New Zealand for so many years, and the most colourful and dominating of them all, visited "Athenree", he learned that Mervyn had political ambitions. Dick looked round the gracious and beautifully sited home and said: "If I had a son in a place like this and he wanted to go into politics, I'd cut him off with a shilling!" Mervyn took no heed, but the electors would not have him. Perhaps single-tax accounted for it.

It was Kipling who wrote the lines I have quoted, about the old three-volume novel. The mood of these verses was the mood of the time—villainy well punished and virtue triumphantly rewarded.

I left 'em all in couples a-kissin' on the decks,  
I left the lovers loving, and the parents signing cheques.  
In endless English comfort by county folk caressed,  
I left the old three-decker at the Islands of the Blest!

We did our serious reading too, such as Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*. I doubt, however, if anyone had heard of Karl Marx.

I had a free run of Victorian novelists, but I preferred boys' books of adventure. We had Mayne Reid, Kingston, and Ballantyne. *Coral Island* was one of my earliest books, and I read it several times. It is still a favourite with the young. Then in the *Boys' Own Paper*, there were the English public school stories of Talbot Baines Reed. I was sure it must be the finest thing in the world to go to an English public school. A real man from a

public school had a halo round him. Do many boys read the *Willoughby Captains* now? I re-read it a few years ago, and it seemed to me to wear well.

The tendency of life in Katikati was to bind us to Britain and her established order: her politics, her Navy and Army, her Empire, her literature, her ways of thought. More or less, the rest of New Zealand was in the same state, though by the time I was ten the Liberal-Labour programme of social legislation was being launched by John Ballance, with Sir George Grey as its originating spirit. New Zealand was still bounded by narrow geographical and mental horizons. Take our little settlement in the Bay of Plenty, a small group of struggling farmers, with a handful of persons with private means, all of whom had recently come to this land. It would have been absurd to them to think of themselves as part of a nation. How could this new land, with its tiny population, make things that could compare at all with those of Britain? "That's an English saddle," one of my uncles would say, and I was completely impressed. How could it evolve ideas, write books, compose music? What had it to say worth saying? Romance was something that belonged to other countries. Rider Haggard, whose books were devoured, found it in Africa. Fenimore Cooper and Mayne Reid found it among American Indians. Those countries were different. We had no history worth writing about. We did not know that the deeds of American scouts and rangers had been paralleled in our own country, only a few years before our settlement was founded. I did not fully realize this myself till, years afterwards, I read the history of the Maori wars by my friend James Cowan.

In a vague way we knew there had been Maori wars. When the settlers arrived, there was a block-house on the territory, a relic of those wars. There were a few Maori villages in the settlement but we saw little of the original owners of the soil. There was no inter-marriage. This had been so-called rebel country, but the local Maoris gave no trouble. We were taught no New Zealand history, at home or at school, and this was so also when I went to school in Auckland. Another significant thing was this: I was in Tauranga more than once in my teens, and no one thought of taking me to see the old Mission House, which is at one end of the town, or the site of the Gate Pa fight at the other. Today "The Elms" is one of Tauranga's show places, and thousands visit it every year. It is unique in this country. Not only has the charmingly designed house been carefully preserved since it was built more than a hundred years ago, but the furniture and relics

of the early days are still there, in their proper setting. In my young days it was not regarded as history. Most of the older people had come from overseas. It is history today. When I came to be in broadcasting, I arranged or wrote talks about these historic places.

Nor were we instructed in the wild life of the country-side—the birds and the trees. Nevertheless, the landscape made a deep and life-long impression on me. It helped to form my mind and ultimately coloured my writing. There was the mysterious beauty of the blue hills behind the farms, the slopes to the tidal estuaries, the rivers and creeks, the scent of fern and tea-tree. There was the sense of space. From the top of Hikurangi behind the Johnston homestead you could see the sweep of the Bay of Plenty down towards the East Cape. There was a tumble of forest-clad hills stretching away into the distance. There was the solemnity of the deep bush, with the kauri as king, for this was the southernmost limit of the kauri. It was frontier country, with the appeal that frontier country always has to a boy. I have seen nothing in my life that I can see so plainly as that old Katikati landscape in the full tide of summer. The heartache it gives me to think of those days has something of the twin qualities of human love—"All the sadness in the sweet; the sweetness in the sad."

The limitations, however, must be stressed. Our roots were in the soil, but they were not deep. The homesteads had their shelter belts of pines, inside which were gardens and orchards of English flowers and trees. Roses bloomed in the gardens; jasmines and dolichos covered the verandas. The sheltering pines seemed to cushion these pioneers from the full influence of their adopted country. They did their daily work—the men especially—in a New Zealand environment; but one can imagine them retreating to the Old Country in most of their homes—English books and periodicals, English pictures, English letters, talk of England and Ireland. On the walls hung coloured pictures from the *Graphic* and *Illustrated London News*. Millais's picture "Bubbles", which a soap firm used as an advertisement—to the intense annoyance of Millais, I believe—was framed in many a New Zealand home in those days. However, the progress of union was going steadily but surely. The old country was blending into the new. When, years later, I tried to put the Katikati settlement into verse, I wrote this: "A new world touched with old, brave in the making, beautiful and bold."

Would these immigrants have gone back if they could? Not many could, and very few did. The Hugh Stewarts left after

nearly thirty years, but Mrs Stewart said if only they could have got a telephone they would have stayed. She herself, widowed, did come back to die here. "What would we have done if we hadn't come out?" asked one of my aunts. "The girls would have married curates; there wasn't any one else. We couldn't have afforded to put the boys into the Army or the Navy, so they would have had to emigrate." She had not been impressed by the dull life of some of the relatives she met when she visited Ireland.

There was no striking material success in Katikati, but there was the excitement of a pioneering life and a sense of freedom. I should say New Zealand gave Vesey Stewart's farmers and their families a better life than Ireland—or the opportunity for making one. They owned their own land, as perhaps they might have done in time had they stayed in Ireland. After writing joyfully to relatives in Ireland about the crop yields in Katikati, "Sandy" Turner said better than this was the fact that the settlers "will not be brought into the Land Court by the landlord or agent; for the land would be theirs and their heirs' for ever". New Zealand society was cruder than Irish, but in it careers were more open to the talents. At any rate, it is a fact that once they have settled in immigrants as a rule do not return. As the years pass, there is no diminution in the wailing of Scottish pipes so far from Lochaber, nor in the fervour of toasts to Robert Burns, nor at St Patrick's Day concerts are songs of the Old Land sung with any less feeling; but Scots and Irish dry their more happy than unhappy tears, and stay where they are.

So life in Katikati gave me deep feelings, but little accurate knowledge. I knew hardly any New Zealand history and could name few New Zealand trees or birds. In those long summer days a bird often sang. It sang with a lovely cadence, sweet but melancholy through the long ecstasy of afternoon. I heard it so often that I came to associate it with the happiness of those summer holidays. I carried that memory with me to my life in the city, and years later that bird sang in my own garden there. The point I want to emphasize is this. No one in Katikati told me the bird's name. I do not think anyone was interested. I did not find out till years later that it was the riro-riro, or grey warbler. I wrote some verses about the riro-riro, in which I described its song as "half joy and half regret". James Cowan, who was steeped in Maori poetry, told me that that description would have appealed to the Maori. That was a stage in my education as a New Zealander. And some years afterwards I was walking in the bush at one of Wellington's eastern bays with a refugee from Europe who was well-



The author's father and mother at Killarney during a visit to England and Ireland in 1915. E. K. Mulgan was then Senior Inspector of Schools in the Auckland District.



"The most venerable looking man I have ever seen." The author's grandfather, the Reverend W. E. Mulgan, rector of Donagh, County Antrim, who was Vesey Stewart's right-hand man in the first party of Katikati settlers, brought in the *Carisbrooke Castle*, 1875. He was vicar of Onchunga, 1879-1896.

versed in music. We listened to a riro-riro. "Why," said my foreign guest, "that bird is lovelier than the nightingale!"

This was some forty years after my Katikati boyhood. Meanwhile, I had taken my wife and children to see the "Hillside" scene. In this country the descent of melancholy and decay upon country homes and their surroundings is swifter and more noticeable than in England. A building in brick or stone may stand for years empty and uncared for without losing its solidity and dignity. If a wooden house is to last, let alone preserve its self-respect, it must be carefully tended. Build a house of heart-kauri, keep it off the ground and paint it regularly, and its life will be astonishingly long. An historic house at Kerikeri, in the Bay of Islands, dates from 1819. But neglect a wooden house, and wind and weather work havoc on it. Failure to paint reduces it to a slattern. Uncared for, the veranda sags, the weatherboards rot. And in parts of New Zealand, where the climate is warm and the rainfall abundant, the garden becomes a ruin of unchecked growth, and native bracken and shrub quickly obliterate pasture.

The melancholy that surrounds such places in New Zealand is distinctive. In their crumbling timbers and riotously conquered gardens there is a pathos hardly to be found in the more durable conditions of England. Often they are mute witnesses to failure of some sort, and isolation deepens the poignancy. In England the uninhabited and neglected is supported, as it were, by its neighbours, like a weak soldier between stronger comrades. You may fill in the New Zealand story as you like—the advance into virgin country, the high hopes and energy of youth, the felling of bush and clearing of scrub, the making of a home. What happened? Perhaps this outpost garrison moved to another site, or farmed elsewhere, or retreated to town. Perhaps other adventurers took on the property and failed. At any rate there it stands, that decaying house, amid its shelter of funereal pines. The shed is nearly on the ground. A few apple and peach trees lift scaly branches above the high invading fern. A plane tree and a holly keep each other company, and perhaps find consolation in whispers about England. On the front veranda there are still some trailing roses. Advance into the farm, and growth of tea-tree and fern, or plants of the bush proper, bar the way. The air is warm with scents of New Zealand soil, an aromatic tang touched, maybe, with the sweet decay of the bush. These are the conquerors. The English rose, verbena and jasmine are doomed.

Even in drier and, in winter, colder areas, where there is little or no fern and scrub to take charge when the farmer's hand is

withdrawn, there is a similar melancholy about a deserted homestead. To some minds indeed, the very nakedness of the landscape—tussock everywhere, unrelieved by trees, and the shoulders of bare hills making hard lines against a steely sky—may accentuate the sadness of frustration and decay.

Over the meadows that blossom and wither,  
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song:  
Only the sun and the rain come hither  
All year long.

The Johnston homestead which, with its surroundings, meant so much to me, did not last very long. Built of kahikatea, by men ignorant of the borer's special fondness for that timber, it began to crumble to dust, and had to be pulled down. But the setting remained—at any rate in my heart—and I returned there, eager for my family to see it. A new and smaller house stood among the pines, now larger and more sinister. In the garden there were a few straggling relics of the good old days. Back of the house, up the hill and down by the creek, was a wilderness. The present occupant, busy with his cows, had no time to check the invaders. Fern and scrub and bush had triumphed. The once open creek-bed, where we used to bathe and bask in the sun,

A boy's will is the wind's will,  
And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts—

was now a jungle in which we lost our way. I wanted to show the children the old bathing-place, but I could not find it.

Never before had I realized so fully the obliterating power of North Island nature. Yet there was something in those stalks of bracken as high as my head, the thick tea-tree scrub, the tall straight rewa-rewa trees that had shot up here and there about the hills, something that was my own, an essential fruit of my own land. They were enemies, watchful ever for any relaxation of man's vigilance, but in a sense they were friends. They were my possessions, like the warm summer scents spread over the landscape, and the quiet solitude of those hills. The sun still shone, the larks still sang, as when I was a boy; the tea-tree still swung its delicate perfume through the air; the riro-riro still sang of joy and sadness; the peak standing sharp against the blue sky still looked down on farm-lands, and tide crawling over hot sand into estuaries, the harbour bar on which breakers tumbled lazily, and beyond, clean of officious sail, the open sea.

My own melancholy, now slightly sweet, now near to tears,

was my own and no one else's. No one but myself could recapture my lost youth. No one else could people those hills and glens, those depths of pine groves and cool damp recesses of bush, with my own Mayne Reid and Kingston heroes, and my own dreams of fame and glory. My children, picnicking there with me by the stream, could not be expected to feel about the place as I did. The younger generation must make its own memories.

## *Chapter Four*

### WHEN AUCKLAND WAS GROWING UP

*Town Life on Little Money—When Walking was Common—Household Goods on Two Wheels—The Old Parsonage—Kipling's Auckland—What Three Admirals Said—Nature and Man in Colonial Landscape—Victorian Architecture made Worse—Library Treasures.*

**I**N 1890 my father moved from the Katikati school, where he was in charge with one assistant, to be first assistant master in Parnell School, Auckland city, and in 1892 I went to the Auckland Grammar School. For my father the change meant opportunity to graduate at Auckland University College; for my mother, it was the beginning of city house-keeping, which was to be her lot for the rest of her life. My mother was the eldest of the Johnston family. She carried an indomitable spirit in a slight frame. For nearly twenty years after her marriage she had a pretty hard time. As I have said, it took my father some time to find his true bent, and though he rose rapidly, some years had to pass before he earned a good salary. My mother tackled the chores of a generally servantless house (though she often had staying relations who helped) with vigour and resource. Ends met, but only just. She made a little pocket-money teaching the piano. However, she never really became a New Zealander. Educated on the Continent, deeply imbued with a sense of family, and of an age, when she emigrated, to appreciate the pleasures of social life in a comfortable vicarage of county standing, she loved the old order of things, except now and then when some one ran down the colonies and things colonial. Then, though she regarded many such things as a joke, she might spring to the defence. She had a quick, sharp, but rather flighty intelligence and exceptional wit. "Alan," she wrote in a letter, "is getting on quite well with his new set of teeth. He has reached the stage of carrying them round in his pocket." I have never met anyone more full of prejudices, or more amusing in expressing them. "The fact is, Mrs Mulgan . . ." said a great friend of mine to her once. "Oh, Mr Gray," she interrupted, "what are facts to me!" It was a pity there was not a Primrose League in New Zealand; she would have been

so happy in it. About the worst thing she could say of any man was that he was a Home Ruler, but perhaps in later years membership of the Labour Party put him in a lower and more dreadful circle.

Even when she was poor she delighted in entertaining. She welcomed her family's friends to the house, and you could always be certain that the party would go with a swing. She liked seeing people enjoying themselves, and she would play round games, or take part in a charade, with as much zest as she cooked for her guests. She was nervous and highly strung, the sort of person who might seize the reins when she was not driving. However, her enjoyment of life never flagged, and she lived to eighty-five, doing her own housework in the city flat she shared with a working sister, and at the end faced a grave operation with complete courage.

In many respects the town life I came to in the nineties was so different from today's that it seems like another world. My father's salary as a teacher was £150 a year for some time. For our first Auckland house, in Parnell, we paid fifteen shillings a week, but that was too much, so we moved into a seven-and-sixpenny one in Newmarket. Like nearly all Auckland homes it had no sanitation. There was no bathroom. We bathed in a movable tub in a sort of wash-house shed. There were no wash-tubs or copper boiler; the clothes were boiled in the yard in the old-fashioned oval boiler on bars.

A man with £500 a year was considered well-to-do; if he had £1000 he was wealthy. We spoke of him with awe; he has a thousand a year! Of course money went much farther then. I have mentioned mutton at a penny a pound. But money was scarce. Men and women, boys and girls, spent much less on their daily round. Pocket money was very thin. We usually walked to places, partly because we were hard up, partly because transport was poor. We walked to school and back, some of us quite long distances. Many men in city offices walked to work and walked back, and carried their lunches in their pockets. A restaurant lunch was beyond the means of many; besides, there were few restaurants. Afternoon-tea as a restaurant habit had not come in; morning- and afternoon-tea in offices was not thought of. When my father taught at Newtown West School, he walked across the city from Parnell and back again. Concert and theatre goers walked home. Every Saturday in winter thousands walked out to Rugby football at Potter's Paddock, Epsom (now Alexandra Park), and walked back. When I spent week-ends at

my grandfather's parsonage at Onehunga I would walk back to Parnell on the Sunday night, and think little of it.

The habit has largely disappeared. Many years later I encountered a survival that astonished me. Among a few friends I asked to dinner at my home in York Bay, Wellington, twelve miles from the heart of the city, was a visitor from Northern Ireland, a retired bank inspector, who was probably in his late sixties. I told him which bus to get, one that would land him almost at my door. "That's all right," he said, "I'll walk." I hastened to explain the situation. "You can't walk from the Royal Oak (his hotel) to York Bay. It's twelve miles." (As a matter of fact it was a bit more.) He was quite firm; he would walk, and walk he did; thoroughly enjoyed following the curve of the beautiful hill-ringed harbour; turned up quite fresh on a warm evening; and made his full contribution to an enjoyable party. That man's custom was to walk ten miles a day.

Yes, we walked a lot in those far-off days. Bus and tram fares were a serious item. Walking up steep Parnell Rise in summer I used to think it would be the height of bliss always to have a few pence in my pocket to buy a bottle of lemonade at Bagley's fruit shop half-way up the hill. Such things were rare treats. There was no flow of money for ice-creams or their equivalent. Ice-creams had not been invented, at any rate for the masses.

Thrift, however, could do much. My father was thrifty; my mother was not. James Dilworth, who left a fortune to establish a school in Auckland, is reputed to have said that even if he earned as little as half a crown a day, he would save something. There was William Leys, also of Auckland, brother of the Thomson Leys who was editor of the *Auckland Star* for forty-five years. William Leys was chairman of the Auckland Liberal Association and put forward the scheme of old-age pensions that Richard Seddon took up and pushed through Parliament. When I served on the *Star* under Thomson Leys he told me his brother never made more than £400 a year, yet he was able to leave enough to provide for his family and partly found the Leys Institute, a library and young people's club.

We had few possessions. Our furniture was of the scantiest, and partly home made. Those were the days when you were glad to make do with soap and candle boxes. Most houses were quite devoid of built-in cupboards and wardrobes. You put up a board on brackets and hung a curtain from it. That the contents of even a well-furnished house look tawdry under the open sky has often been observed. There is a fierce light that beats upon

the best carpet and blackens every blot. When we moved, our sticks of furniture (almost literally sticks) and all our personal possessions went into one load of a two-wheeled express cart. The merciful cover provided by a pantechicon had not arrived. And how pitiful they looked as they were borne along the street!

Yet we were comfortable and not unhappy. We had plenty of food, good beds to sleep on, books to read, amusements that cost little or nothing, and an affectionate home life. I had Katikati for my summer holidays, and for some years the run of the parsonage at Onehunga. This place, more like a traditional English vicarage than anything else I have seen in New Zealand, was a wonderful place for a boy. It had many rooms, attics, a coach-house and a loft, a field, an orchard and a tennis lawn—everything to a big chestnut tree—all surrounded by dry stone walls built of the dark lava rock that had poured out from the many now extinct volcanoes of the Auckland isthmus. I have never known a house with so much atmosphere, from the blend of books and tobacco in my grandfather's study, where I stumbled through Latin texts with the old man, and the warm sweet smell of the big kitchen, to the English hunting prints in the bathroom. The house had been built by the first vicar, who was doctor and scientist as well as priest, and could turn his hand capably to ecclesiastic and domestic architecture. He added to his vicarage as his children (fourteen he had altogether) came along. Nine Mulgans lived in it after that, so it had human associations in plenty.

Yes, I was fortunate. I experienced a good deal of unhappiness as a boy, and I have never cherished the belief that childhood is our happiest time. I had also much happiness, and none of my unhappiness sprang from lack of money. My parents must have worried; they always do in such circumstances. A child is happy, however, if it has the things I have mentioned, and he can easily be spoiled if he has too many of certain other things. For example, I had few toys, but that did not disappoint me. I could make do with simple things, as all children can if they are allowed to, and I had the world of my imagination, though, as I feel now on looking back, a rather too large and sprawling world, which lacked the straight road of hard thinking and discipline. In those days, however, the visible world was a wider and more wonder-provoking place than it is today. There seemed to be surprise and romance round every corner.

I must describe the Auckland to which I came, the Auckland of the nineties. Early in this decade Rudyard Kipling flitted

through New Zealand, and wrote some memorable lines about us. "Broom behind the windy town" is Wellington, and "the kowhai's gold, flung for gift in Taupo's face", is a tribute to a tree that has its annual few days of glory. Incidentally, if Kipling had not come to New Zealand he might not have written "M'Andrew's Hymn", which would have been a great pity; it is a performance far above the power of his literary detractors. For Kipling is said to have taken M'Andrew from an engineer in the first *Doric*, one of the beautiful screw-and-sail ships that opened the direct steamer service between England and New Zealand by way of the two capes—Cape of Good Hope outward from England, and Cape Horn homeward. However, Kipling's New Zealand verse that is best known here is the one with the heading "Auckland" in his "Song of the Cities".

Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart—  
On us, on us the unswerving season smiles,  
Who wonder 'mid our fern why men depart  
To seek the Happy Isles!

This has been quoted so often it has become a joke, and no self-respecting writer would use it. I am disturbed lest someone opening the book at this page should see this verse and decide to read no more. The verse is as well known in New Zealand as the oft misquoted "East is East, and West is West" is generally; both are apt to produce groans rather than appreciation.

I am sure Kipling meant his one verse headed "Auckland" to apply to the rest of New Zealand as well. The joke of it lies in the phrase "unswerving season", for if there is one feature in the New Zealand climate that strikes one more than another, it is variety. It can be cold in summer and warm in winter. Fires on our Christmas Day are by no means rare. You cannot predict fine weather for any length of time. If our "season" were "unswerving", our land would not be the chief dairy-farm of the Empire and a large supplier of Britain's meat. Auckland city is afflicted with a species of hot muggy weather that goads the woollen-clad citizen into murmuring, "Last, lousiest" and so on.

Auckland's beauty, however, is undeniable. The story goes that when Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Jellicoe, was Governor-General of New Zealand, he forgathered with two other admirals in Auckland, and they discussed the harbours of the world. I am not quite sure what the exact order of reference was; whether it was "best", "finest", or "most beautiful"—probably a bit of each. However, they agreed that Rio was first, Auckland

second, and Sydney third. In the earlier days of which I write, Auckland, at any rate seen as a panorama, was probably even more beautiful. Its hill-dotted isthmus, with blue forested hills to east and west, and the islanded gulf lying to the north and east, is a superb site for a city and the commercial hand of man had not done its unaesthetic worst with the harbour front. The Waitemata—that is, the harbour proper (and Auckland should be judged by its harbour plus its approaches)—was wider and closer to its original condition. There were no tide deflectors. Pohutukawa trees shaded Beach Road, and St George's Bay and Judge's Bay were real bays, not enclosed. The tide came into an intake at Mechanics Bay, where the railway station and warehouses stand today, and derelict ships lay in the mud.

Auckland, even then New Zealand's largest city, had to provide modern wharves and a big railway terminus, and it is difficult to see how this could have been done without sacrificing some natural beauty. Auckland is not an easy city to plan, for the terrain is a series of spurs and gullies running down to the harbour. The main street, Queen, is a short gully, and land had to be reclaimed at its foot to give the heart of the city room to beat. Moreover, Auckland was not founded by an organized homogeneous community like the Canterbury Pilgrims or the Scots in Otago, men with definite ideas in their heads and on paper. Early Auckland grew in a miscellany round Governor Hobson and his officials when the Waitemata was chosen as the site for the capital in 1840, and to this day one can detect resultant differences between this city and Christchurch and Dunedin.

An increasing number of New Zealanders lament the passing of so much of our superb forest. Many an aesthetic and economic crime has been committed here in the name of progress. Wherever the pioneer's axe strikes in any country it leaves a scar (however temporary) and the raw frontier town can be one of the ugliest things. Unplanned and heedless destruction of the New Zealand forest has raised problems of land deterioration and river flooding which we have been grappling with only in recent years. If, however, the New Zealand landscape had not greatly changed, we Europeans should not be here, or not nearly so many of us. You cannot farm in bush country without cutting down trees, or make a port for big ships without altering the shore-line. I suggest that if we could go back to the New Zealand landscape of 1840 with present vistas in our minds, we should find the vast predominance of green, mostly dark, and blue, rather monotonous. The spring in our evergreen bush has little of the

miracle of the English season. Houses and gardens and parks and cultivation of the land have produced a more varied scene, a more colourful pattern. Wellington, for example, has far more colour than when the pioneers came in 1840 and found so much of its ring of hills covered with forest. Let us love and cherish our evergreen flora, but gratefully accept the fact that English trees and crops have added greatly to the beauty and graciousness of our landscape. Think of the oaks about Symonds Street and in the Domain in Auckland; Hagley Park, Christchurch, in spring and autumn; the chequer-board of cultivation on the Canterbury Plains, once a waste of tussock and scrub; Lombardy poplars among South Island mountains, in autumn towers of gold against distant snow. Civilization may destroy, but it may also diversify. Our civilized landscape, like everything else in our society, is a marriage between two worlds.

It is in detail, seen close up, with eyes taken away from nature's frame, that New Zealand cities are apt to be drab. So viewed in the nineties Auckland could be very drab. It was slovenly and dirty. In part this was a condition of the times. Lack of drainage was a common state. What now goes down the drain was disposed of in the old primitive manner, and sometimes embarrassingly early in the night. There was typhoid every year in Auckland. Street traffic was all by horses, and horses made dirt. The stones used to macadamize the roads were supposed to go through a two and a half inch ring (I think that was the size), but it was obvious many would not. There was dust in the summer and mud in the winter. That Auckland was a port added to the dirt. Hilly waterside Auckland could not be as clean and tidy as flat, inland Christchurch.

It was a city of poor architecture. Among large public buildings, the Supreme Court, the Post Office in Shortland Street, St Andrew's Church in Symonds Street, and the Bank of New Zealand in Queen Street, stood out in lonely distinction. We have suffered from a surfeit of bad Victorian design. The missionaries and some of the early pioneers had excellent taste: they knew the value of simplicity. The great Bishop Selwyn left some gems of small churches in and about Auckland. The long, plain house with French doors opening on to a veranda was an attractive type—perhaps the nearest we have approached yet to a style suiting this country. We have never equalled the colonial homes of some of the American States. To the Victorian liking for over-ornamentation in the architecture and furnishing we added some vile trimmings of our own. Narrow little-used verandas were

decorated with scroll work probably made by the mile in factories. Architects were few, and to the mass of people their profession meant little or nothing. Long after my boyhood this attitude persisted and is still to be found. "What d'you want an architect for? Get a builder—a practical man." It is so typically a pioneering attitude that one wonders Martin Chuzzlewit should have been so confident of success even in the Eden of his dreams. Fortunately there has been a vast improvement in this field. For some years Auckland has had a flourishing University School of Architecture, and can show in the classical War Memorial Museum on Domain Hill, with a passage from Pericles cut into its front, a building that would be acclaimed anywhere. Even in those early days, however, the city had treasures. Sir George Grey presented to the Municipal Library sixteen thousand books, an art collection, and a large number of autograph letters and other historical documents. Among the books were many illuminated manuscripts—what is still the most extensive collection of incunabula (books printed before 1500) in Australia and New Zealand, including three Caxtons—and the First, Second and Fourth Folios of Shakespeare.

## *Chapter Five*

### MUD AND LITTLE SHIPS

*"There's a schooner in the offing . . ."—Port for Pacific Traders—Fine Yachts for a Yachtsman's Paradise—Arduous Travel—The Rule of Mud—Dossing in Little Steamers—Farming More Profitable than Gold—Celebrity Entertainers—The Old Theatre Pit—Fuller Home Life—The Brighter Eye of Wonder.*

THE SCENE from the site of the War Memorial Museum would remind a Greek of the Aegean. Auckland is a city of the sea, a harbour for great ships and small, a port of business and pleasure. In my young days Queen Street Wharf, at the bottom of the main street, was a wooden affair with tees running at right angles. On the left-hand side, where the Ferry Building is now, there was an enclosure for watermen's rowing-boats. If you wished to go out to a ship in the stream, as shipping reporters often did, you hired one of these boats. In earlier years there had been fierce competition for English newspaper files brought by sailing ship, and Henry Brett, one of the founders of the *Auckland Star* and later its chief proprietor, distinguished himself by the energy and speed with which he boarded ships as they came in. The harbour ferries were on the right-hand side, and beyond them was a wharf where English clippers used to berth. Sail was still common and round-the-world clippers were fighting their short and losing battle against steam. Direct steam service between England and New Zealand was only a few years old, but as early as about 1890 it was considered curious that a newly married couple known to the family should choose to travel to England by sail. They must have been almost the last persons who did. The first steamer fleets of the New Zealand Shipping Company and the Shaw Savill and Albion Line were still running; the *Doric* was one. With their single screws and sails these yacht-like ships could make the run across the world in not much longer time than their successors, which were twin-screw and wholly steam.

In the early nineties, however, Auckland seldom saw these Home-going steamers, which was significant. The cargo was not there for them to lift. Auckland did not produce much wool or

meat, and dairying was to come. What we had that the South had not—at any rate in the same variety—was the Island trade. Schooners came to Auckland from all over the Pacific. Stevenson discussed which was the better opening for a romance—a room in an inn, or a schooner. With my Auckland memories, I might vote for the schooner. “There’s a schooner in the offing with her top-sails shot with fire.” Could any picture be more inviting? Auckland got much of its Island fruit by these little traders. James Cowan has left us a description of sailing up the Waitemata in a top-sail schooner. The dark-eyed kanaka crew wore big silver rings in their ears, and a cadaverous black-bearded skipper stood by the native at the wheel. The sticky deck was piled high with boxes of oranges; you could smell the ship half a mile away. Numbers of the skippers, mates, and hands who came to Auckland in these schooners had seen strange things in the Islands. Some of them had fought for their lives. At one time there were Melanesian islands where boats’ crews going in to trade always went fully armed and took the beach stern first; and even then they sometimes lost a man from musket or poisoned arrow. So in the eighties and nineties there were many stories to be picked up on the Auckland waterfront, and fortunately there was at least one man who kept his ears open and his pen ready. This was James Cowan whom I have mentioned, a young reporter on the *Auckland Star*, who had two dominant passions, the Maori and the sea. You will find in his book *Suwarrow Gold* not only thrilling tales of the Pacific, some of them collected in Auckland, but a brilliant description of the Island-trading ships that sailed in and out of Auckland, and the hard-bitten men who manned them. There was a ship-chandler’s store in Lower Queen Street, says Cowan, which smelt beautifully of tarred rope and paints and oils. The man in charge was a big whiskered chap with a rolling gait, who had been a bos’n on clipper ships. Schooner men and skippers of all kinds used to meet there and yarn, while an old blind captain would sit making rope fenders, and listening.

Auckland’s anniversary regatta is still a great occasion, with its congregation of yachts and launches. In far-off days there were no launches, but there was a feature that has long since disappeared—races for traders. Schooners and cutters and scows, including some of the ships in the Island trade, would race down Rangitoto Channel, perhaps as far as Tiritiri. The broad-beamed, flat-bottomed, centre-boarded scow, so well adapted for the shallow waters of harbours up and down the Auckland province,

is still (with the addition of an auxiliary engine) a feature of coastal trading. Even in my childhood there were racing yachts, for the delights of one of the grand yachting grounds in the world—the gulf and the well-havened coast northwards—had been discovered. The Baileys and Logans were not only making a name in New Zealand for the design of their yachts and the craftsmanship put into them; their fame was going abroad. I do not know whether Aucklanders yet realize what fine yacht-builders their city can claim, fit to be ranked with the best anywhere. Some of these vessels, built in Auckland of heart-kauri in the nineties, are still in commission there and elsewhere in the nineteen-fifties, and appear to be good for many more years. Larger ships too, including Island traders, came from yards in Auckland and other parts of the province. Kauri, one of the world's best softwoods, was ten shillings a hundred feet then. Now it is some pounds a hundred—if you can get it.

None of the yachts were large according to the English standards, but if you did not mind roughing it a bit they were comfortable enough for lengthy cruises. They were manned and cared for by amateurs, who went away in them on summer weekends, and out of season cleaned and painted. Below the yachts and mullet boats were a host of smaller craft, and many young Aucklanders in city and province were bred to boats as the farmer's son was to horses. Cricket lovers used to lament the seduction of our summer sea, for how could you build up the game when so many young fellows went boating on Saturday? However, nothing makes a boy handier and more resourceful. The result of this was seen when in two world wars the Navy wanted all the good men it could get. Auckland, I should add, is by no means the only place in New Zealand where yachting and boating are popular. The whole nation has a sense of the sea. I have been told that the Admiralty considered the quality of New Zealand aspirants for commissions in the second war to be extraordinarily high. But I would not confine to the Navy the benefits of this common knocking about in small craft and doing all manner of jobs oneself, sometimes with scanty material. It helped to mould the New Zealand soldier as well—to make him tough, enterprising, contriving.

Then there were visits from the Navy. A single ship would stir our interest; a call by the Australian Squadron was an event. That was long before there was a New Zealand Navy. Though war-ships used our docks, Sydney was the base for Australia and New Zealand. The flagship *Orlando* was an armoured cruiser,

and a mighty ship she seemed, though her tonnage was only 5600. In the squadron were ships that carried sail, and beautiful some of them were. They were useful for policing the Islands and showing the flag, but I wonder how they would have fared in a fleet action. Sail lingered on in our waters until the turn of the century, when all their kind were swept away by "Jacky" Fisher's reforming broom.

You cannot picture clearly the Auckland of those days without understanding how much the city and the province depended on the sea for their transport. Far more than any other province, Auckland lived by a fleet of little coasters, for railways were few and short, and roads were bad—in winter horrible. Railways were stretching out, but there were bad gaps. In the centre of the island a great area of country, without railways or roads, and known only to a few, lay between the inhabited parts of Auckland and Wellington provinces. The Bay of Plenty was not connected by rail, and in the long, narrow, sea-indented peninsula north of Auckland city, the railway system was a thing of bits and pieces. The rail link between Auckland and Whangarei, the chief town of North Auckland, was not completed until the twenties of this century.

The state of roads then is almost beyond comprehension to-day. Road metal was scarce and local bodies poor. In summer roads were deep in dust; in winter deep in mud. My father became a school inspector in 1898, and like his colleagues, kept a horse for doing his country rounds. Sometimes he would be away from home for weeks. The first thing he would look for in a horse was a good walking pace, because over long stretches of road it was impossible to go beyond a walk. At times he would spend a whole day riding from one school to another.

The township of Kamo, a little way out of Whangarei, lies some forty miles from the more northerly town of Kawakawa. In summer-time this forty miles was a drive of a few hours by coach; in winter the road could be so impassable that there were occasions when passengers went right back on their tracks. They returned to Whangarei, took ship to Auckland, a hundred miles or so, took another ship to the Bay of Islands, north of Whangarei, a night's journey, and then travelled by train from the bay to Kawakawa. Thus, barred by a stretch of road forty miles long, they travelled two or three hundred miles, and probably took some days to do it.

So numbers of people travelled by sea. The little ships of the Northern Steamship Company served the province round its

long coast, from Kawhia in the south-west to Opotiki in the Bay of Plenty. With the Union Company, they ran the ferry to New Plymouth from Onehunga, on Auckland city's western harbour, which was the quickest way from Auckland to the south. At one time the Northern Company had some thirty ships, ranging from thirty-four to over a thousand tons, and a number of auxiliaries for working rivers and tendering. Most, if not all, of these thirty ships carried passengers. There was a long line of ports and settlements that took the Company's passengers and cargo—safe bays, one or two of them long and deep enough to take a naval fleet, bar harbours, big estuaries patterned by narrow channels, tidal rivers where the skipper had to know his water like the men on the Mississippi, and take care not to be caught on the falling tide. On one river I knew the ship steamed so close to the bank in places that she was liable to tear branches off the fringing willows. Vital links with the world, those ships meant something that has gone from our life. In some places the arrival and departure of the weekly "boat" was an event, and the township turned out to see it. Today, there is not one passenger ship in the Northern Company's service. Railways, and motors running on good roads, have taken all that business away.

From these little ports travellers rattled away in coaches over bad roads. What it took a day to cover behind relays of horses, you now make in an hour or two by car. My own holiday voyage generally took me past the Thames and up the river to Paeroa. No memory of my boyhood is clearer than an early summer morning on that river—looking out on to a mysterious world of bush and swamp, with an occasional light in a lonely farmhouse as its occupants stirred for the day, and the barking of a dog breaking the silence of dawn. The plume of smoke streaming far astern, the rhythm of the engines, and the glare from the opened furnace seen through the engine-room skylight, followed by the clink of the fireman's shovel—all this turned the tiny ship into a creature of power and beauty. She was not making a prosaic routine run, but raising new horizons, uncovering strange lands. Little things, this gleam from a ship's fire and the clink of a shovel, but so were "four ducks on a pond and a grass bank beyond", which the poet justifiably said were to be remembered for years, remembered with tears. On those mornings up the river the rose of the world seemed to unfold. To descend from that possessing entrancement of wonder to fact, what I was looking at on my right was the Piako swamp. It is now all dairy-farms, criss-crossed by excellent roads over which motor-cars move at a speed then be-

yond our dreams. In my day this was the edge of civilization, where history was being made.

Those little ships! In the nineties—I am writing particularly of the time before the Northern Company reached the thousand-ton class—only one or two of the Company's fleet had separate cabins or state-rooms, as they are called now. Why state-rooms? They are all rooms, but I have seen some on ocean-going ships that were far from being state. The pride of the Northern Company's fleet for many years was the *Clansman*—about 600 tons, 190 feet long and only twenty-six feet in beam. Lord, how she rolled! The *Clansman* served the people of Auckland very well for fifty years. For a long time she made a double run every week—Bay of Islands, Whangaroa, and Mangonui and back to Auckland, and then to Tauranga and back. She was the city's chief link with the Bay of Islands and the Bay of Plenty. Then, when her day was over because the train and motor had taken away her business, she broke her shaft off Cape Brett, and was towed to Auckland and broken up. By great good luck, for which I have to thank Sir Ernest Davis, then Chairman of the Company, I was given the *Clansman's* bell. This beautiful bell, one of my most cherished possessions, hangs in my porch within reach of the salt spray, but by waters the ship never knew.

You may imagine how large were cabins off the saloon in a ship with a beam of twenty-six feet, but they seemed wonderful to a child. Even ships trading to Australia had four-berth cabins in which you could lean out of a berth and touch the opposite one. Travelling across the Pacific in the *Niagara* on our way home from England as late as 1926, my wife and I had a deck cabin that was six feet six inches square. In the little coastal ships without cabins you dossed in the saloon. That is, the men did. The women slept, or tried to sleep, in the ladies' cabin. "Dossing" was the right word. You did not take off your clothes—not all of them—and the Company provided a blanket. You dozed off to the throb of the engines, which were just through a bulkhead, and to the clink of glasses in the sentry-box of a bar off the saloon. You had meals in the same saloon, and perhaps while you ate, the steward and his pantry-boy washed dishes on the plush-covered settee beside the table. Plush, of course; this was the age of plush.

Everybody travelled in those little ships. They were uncomfortable, and if you were a bad sailor journeys were apt to be a nightmare. There were a lot of smells, blending into one—steam, rubber, oil, paint, tar, whiffs from the galley, the sea itself, and cargo. There was all the miscellany of goods the out-settlements

needed, and perhaps a few sheep or cattle. You were much closer to it all than in bigger ships on longer voyages. I can smell it still, that smell of little ships. I get a whiff of it now when I go down to a wharf, and I like it. It is real sea travel, and it takes me right back. I know others of my time who also like it. But then I am fond of the sea, and I am a fairly good sailor. Better men than I go pale as soon as the screw begins to turn.

You should realize what Auckland province was like in those days. It was far behind the South in farming, and largely dependent on timber, kauri gum, and gold. In the city you could smell the gum in the stores, and the freshly cut timber in the saw-mills. The magnificent kauri pine was confined to the Auckland province. The resin from it was dug out of the earth, mostly in the peninsula north of Auckland city, and in that remote region the industry built up a world of its own. The North had been the cradle of New Zealand. There the missionaries had started work, the Treaty of Waitangi had been signed between Maori Chiefs and a British Government reluctant to annex New Zealand, and the first capital had been set up. Circumstances had diverted the main stream of development from the region, and in my young days it slept peacefully through the years, savouring the sun and the sea, as little known to the bustling wealthy South as the Highlands were to Londoners at the end of the eighteenth century.

Gum-diggers roamed over its wastelands, then considered worthless, but now responding well to scientific farming. There were many hard-working, clean-living men on the fields, but the industry naturally attracted the down-and-outs and failures. All you needed was a tent, a gum-spear, and a spade, and you were a waster or very unfortunate if you did not make tucker—a free life, if a hard one. Many a remittance-man of good family from England drifted to the gum-fields, to work alongside men of the humblest origin—literally “duke’s son, cook’s son, son of a belted earl”! City magistrates would discharge prisoners on condition they went into the country, which often meant the gum-fields, and townsmen regarded the industry as the last refuge of the destitute.

One day, about 1901 or 1902, the opening years of the century, I came back from a suburban court with two leading members of the Auckland Bar. They agreed that the province was progressing, but it was a pity it was so dependent on these vanishing commodities—timber, gum and gold. They had no prescience of the enormous development in the dairying industry that was to come so soon. The Auckland volume of the *Cyclopaedia of New*

*Zealand*, published about that time, was almost equally in the dark. It actually recommended ostrich-farming, which was already practised near Auckland as well as by the vicar of Katikati. The sheep-kings of the South must have smiled. Yet within a few years dairying developed to an extent that caused an economic and political revolution in the province and in the colony. It produced wealth beyond dreams, and did more than anything else to put the North Island so far ahead of the South in population. From the swing in population followed a swing in political power. New Zealand was to become the "dairy-farm of the Empire", and Auckland province its most productive paddock. Millions upon millions came from Auckland's grasslands. Gold is a fickle mistress; farming a steady wife.

Such was Auckland city—lovely but drab and dirty, centre of an undeveloped estate. Physically and mentally, it was cut off from the South to an extent hard to realize today. The quickest journey to Wellington, which I have mentioned, was all night at sea and then all day in the train. The sea was liable to be very rough; as a commercial traveller put it, the small ship stood on its hind-legs and barked at the scenery. Or you travelled by sea round the east coast, a matter of days, with calls at Gisborne and Napier. As a consequence, most travelling was done from necessity. The practice of taking long journeys for pleasure was to come. The result was that Auckland knew little about most of New Zealand, and the rest little about Auckland. The distant and suspicious relations between the centres recalled the title of Sir William Fox's book published in 1851—*The Six Colonies of New Zealand*. The South Island thought Auckland a jealous and grasping but self-satisfied parvenu. We were certainly full of grievances about the allocation of money for public works, and with good reason. The South Island had had the population and the wealth, and therefore the political power, which it used to full advantage. The country was largely open by nature to the sheep-farmer. There had been no land disputes with the Maori since the Wairau affray, and no wars.

I think, however, there was less self-satisfaction in Auckland than the South imagined. Many of us in Auckland had a sense of inferiority. If we knew anything of New Zealand history, we were aware that Canterbury and Otago had been more regularly and solidly founded. We believed they were more cultivated in the farm and in the mind; this was certainly true of the farm. That they were wealthier we could tell from the monthly lists of deceased persons' estates. We looked with envy at pictures of

their school and university buildings. Our own University College was a block of old wooden buildings in a back street. When a new lecturer arrived from England and took a cab to a reception for him at the college, the cabby did not know where the place was.

However, at the beginning of the century, times were changing rapidly. The North overtook the South in population. It was to forge ahead so rapidly that half a century later its numbers were twice those of the South. The opening of the Main Trunk railway between Wellington and Auckland in 1908 was an important advance in nation-making. It cut down the journey from twenty-nine hours to eighteen, and ultimately, fourteen, and made travelling far more pleasant. I wrote in my centennial history of Wellington that "those who grumble about spending a night in a chair in the express may learn from their fathers or mothers what it was like to be landed on the New Plymouth wharf on a cold, dark morning after a wild night at sea, with only half the journey covered". Besides, better communication with Wellington meant better communication with the whole of the South Island. In few small countries have geographical conditions affected political development and hampered unification to such a degree as in New Zealand. One really has to see the country to realize this—its length and narrowness, mountain chains and rivers, and the sundering strait called Cook, whose winds, deep seas and uncertain currents carry the sort of challenge that the greatest of English navigators had so often to meet.

It is only fair to the South Island to say that it had a great deal to do with the development of the North. Not only were numbers of its young men attracted northwards by the opening up of new land, but long before the great land boom of this century, Southern energy, brains, and experience had begun to fertilize North Island farming. The best farming was in the South, and perhaps it still is. It is claimed for Southland, the most southerly district, that it continues to lead. Like Otago, Southland is largely Scottish, and I have read that Scottish farming is the best in Britain. Except for climate, our South Island farmers learned their farming under easier conditions than men in the North, and the harder climate probably put them on their mettle. There was a similar movement in education. Otago and Canterbury were first with university institutions and teachers' training colleges. In 1869, a few years before the abolition of provincial government, Canterbury, Otago and Nelson were spending an average £2 10s. per child of school age. The average for the rest of the country was

five shillings. A stream of university graduates and trained teachers went north to raise educational standards. Now the problem is to redress the balance and colonize the South afresh. The more the North draws ahead of the South in population, the more opportunities it presents to Southern youth, at any rate in city employment. As I write, in 1957, the population of Auckland is touching 400,000, and Dunedin's has reached 100,000.

A brief description of social life of Auckland may begin with a note on public amusements. One theatre in the city, and a couple of places where permanent vaudeville was established about the end of the nineties, provided professional stage entertainment. The cinema lay in the future. I remember paying six-pence to look into a box where, in a frame a few inches square, a famous dancer was shown in action. This must have been a precursor of the screen. The theatre had a pit under the dress-circle, but no gallery. The pit was a malodorous place on a crowded night—bad ventilation and smells, and perhaps beer bottles rolling on the floor. There were no backs to the seats, and the great idea was to sit in the front row where you could lean your arms on the partition that divided you from the stalls. If the play was exciting, you could swell the applause by kicking the woodwork of the partition. It made a lovely noise. "Step but within this circle [I quote from memory] and on thy head, yea though it wore a crown, I launch the curse of Rome!" What a scene that is in *Richelieu*—when you are young! How I kicked the partition when Walter Bentley spoke those lines! Walter Bentley was one of my heroes—*Hamlet*, *David Garrick*, and *The Silver King*, best of melodramas. Not until I was middle-aged did I learn of an historic chapter in his career. It was through Bentley leaving his company in the lurch in Scotland that young Frank Benson got his chance. He was only a junior, but he managed to take the show over and carry it on, and from that developed the famous Benson Shakespearian Company. However, it was earlier than Bentley, when I was ten, that I saw my first play. It was *Julius Caesar*. Ten years later I sat in a packed pit and heard *Faust* for the first time. A young Marguerite (at any rate she looked it), a slim good-looking Faust, and a first-rate Mephistopheles; I walked home on clouds.

It is astonishing how much drama and music came to this very remote colony with its tiny population. It meant a journey across the world (by way of Australia, sometimes, which helped) and rough travelling through the country. Yet before my day New Zealand saw more professional Shakespeare in a given time than

it has since, unless we except Allan Wilkie's gallant ventures in this century. Stock companies took root for a while. One was led by William Hoskins, who is said to have taught Henry Irving. One enthusiast in Wellington records seeing, between 1875 and 1892, twelve performances of *Hamlet*, with nine different actors in the part, and seven of *Macbeth*. In the mid-nineties I saw *Henry V*, with George Rignold in the lead, the greatest Henry of his time, and perhaps of any time. That performance of more than fifty years ago is as fresh in my mind as the screen version I saw in 1946, and in some respects I prefer it. Altogether in New Zealand I have seen twenty of Shakespeare's plays done by professionals including *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Measure for Measure*, and *King John*. J. L. Toole was out here when I was small, and Janet Achurch with Ibsen. I heard Mark Twain and H. M. Stanley lecture. I was too young for Santley, Foli and Madame Patey, but a long line of singers and instrumentalists I have heard includes Antonia Dolores, Paderewski (twice), Kreisler (there is none like him), Mischa Elman, Melba, Kirkby Lunn, Nordica, Moiseiwitsch, Backhaus, Jean Gerardy, and Carreno, and this is stopping a long way back. Carreno, one of the greatest pianists of the time, was then acclaimed in Europe and the Americas, but had not played in London. When I was a boy, a life-long love was started with introduction to Gilbert and Sullivan. Professional companies brought them round every few years, and the Amateur Operatic Society played them in between. The popularity of these operas in New Zealand to this day is part of the proof that their appeal transcends space and the making of new nations.

There were concerts by local talent. At these in the nineties the Victorian ballad reigned, as it had among my elders in the country. If we wallowed in sentiment, at least we did so to tunes that had some body in them. The Choral Society had a large and faithful public for oratorios and cantatas, and sacred songs were popular in concert programmes and in the drawing-room. It must be remembered, wrote Oliver Duff fifty years later in *New Zealand Now*, that New Zealand has always been Puritan; five out of six of its first generation were reared on the Bible. The suburban church concert was a local event, and as a social gathering more important than it is now. That the general standard of music has risen considerably is not surprising. We were very far from the great centres. The gramophone, which was to bring the best music of the world to colonial areas, was only a curiosity. There was a great deal of music in the home, and more in town

than country, because neighbours were closer. People gathered round the piano of an evening, and played cards and round games. Do people still play "Musical Chairs" and "General Post"? At musical evenings everybody did his or her bit. There was the young lady who really couldn't sing, she was much too nervous. Among all these people, she really couldn't! However, a little pressure sufficed, and it turned out that her music was with her hat and coat in the bedroom. Whether it was good or bad the company was pleased; they smiled and said "Thank you". Even the poor performer of poor music felt she was helping things along. In the drawing-room, as everywhere else, fun was where you made it.

Relations between the sexes were governed by a pretty strict code. "Knowing" people was a more formal process than it is now. There was an etiquette of calling and being received into a circle, which made it harder for the young to get to know strangers. At dances it was seen to that girls got partners. The idea of taking a girl to a dance and dancing with her all evening would have shocked society. Girls and young men might know each other for years without using Christian names. When I wrote a novel about those times, my characters' manner of address seemed strange to some readers, and even incredible. I can assure them that people of my young days really did speak like that. I recently compared notes with a grandmother who is a good deal younger than I. She told me her children shrieked with laughter on learning that their mother had been proposed to as "Miss Brown". Today a young man is introduced to Miss Margaret Brown, and calls her "Peggy" right away. A little incident of my middle age may be offered as a contrast. I went to a committee meeting in a new suit. Sitting next to me was a woman in her thirties, whom I had met occasionally over a few years, the daughter of a bishop. She leaned over and felt my sleeve with finger and thumb. "That's a nice piece of tweed," she said. Though I did not mind in the least, I was rather startled, and my reply about the cost of the tweed was perhaps not so neat as it should have been. I thought immediately of the nineties.

Clothes were much more conventional and sombre. Top-hats and black tail-coats or full frock-coats were the city wear for many men. Under them were the stiff starched shirt and high single-fold collar; the turn-over starched collar came in some time in the nineties. On hot moist Auckland days this dress must have been most uncomfortable, especially when the edge of the collar close under the chin began to fray. The era of checked plus-

fours, bright sports pull-overs and sports coats was to come. To-day, the dress of a university professor may very easily cause you to take him for a student, but that would have been an impossibility fifty years ago. Women were expected to dress soberly, especially for the street. A woman who wore red ran the risk of being thought to be no better than she should be. Today a woman may wear anything she likes. What has happened to her general appearance is well illustrated by an incident in an Auckland tram. In the honest belief that she was under age, the conductor charged a young mother half fare. She was indignant, but why? Whatever they may be in spirit, men and women look younger than they did, and they dress with more colour. Among the social changes I have seen is this greater use of colour generally. You see it in clothes, in private and public gardens, and on houses and in furnishings. Gardens are much more of a blaze. We paint house doors a vivid red or green, a thing I do not remember seeing when I was young. I am frequently struck by the greater colourfulness of summer crowds today, at tennis or cricket, and I find the change very pleasant.

I rejoice at the greater freedom women have won, and the franker and friendlier relations that have developed between the sexes, at the removal of certain old conventions, prejudices and inhibitions in everyday life. However, there is always a debit side to progress. Life was pleasanter in some ways. It was quieter and slower. We had more time to stand and stare. Manners may have been too formal at times, but they counted for a great deal. Despite all the legislation since then to improve the lot of the masses, there was far less class feeling, class bitterness, than there was in later years. It was a younger world, which with a bright eye of wonder saw frontiers on every horizon, and believed in the law of progress. Science had got into its stride, but its application to daily life was so limited that I did not use a telephone till I was grown up. The next fifty years, with their motor-cars, their radio, their aeroplanes, and their wars, were to dull that sense of youth and wonder a great deal, even to destroy it and replace it in some minds with cynicism and despair.

So I beg you not to pity the people of the nineties too much. It is a mistake we often make about the past. We are impressed by its hardships, or what we think of as hardships. Sometimes all that is involved is that people in those days lacked our comforts. Driving through the country with my wife one day, I remarked to her on the enormous convenience of the electricity service in New Zealand. What a change from the days of kerosene lamps and

candles! "Yes," she replied, "it used to take one of our family an hour a day to trim and fill the lamps and look after the candles. But the curious thing is that with all the time saved through electricity, and other improvements, we don't seem to have any more leisure." Fifty years ago and farther back, people had resources which many of us lack today. Our grandparents did not go about bemoaning their lot; they did their daily jobs and enjoyed life. I think the people of the nineties were at least as happy as those of today, probably happier. They did not carry, visibly, the burden of their woes. In certain pictures that have come from the Left, of a people oppressed and unhappy, it is difficult to recognize one's country.

## *Chapter Six*

### SPARTAN SCHOOL DAYS

*The Scholarship Ladder—School Without Playing Fields—Academic Bias—Sad Case of History and Geography—English and Latin Well Taught—Value of Teachers from England—Mystery of Discipline—Cricket Love and Failure—Use for School Prizes—End of an Era—South African War—We Begin to Come of Age.*

THE STORY OF MY YEARS at the Auckland Grammar School keeps me in Auckland, but I do not suppose that in its work my school differed much from other schools throughout New Zealand. They had, I take it, the same kind of curriculum, and good and bad teaching mixed. I went to the Auckland Grammar School in 1892, at the early age of ten, and stayed there till the end of 1899, eight years, which must have been a record, or nearly so. It was the Auckland College and Grammar School then. The "College" was a relic of the days when, in the absence of a university college in Auckland, the school prepared boys for the University. It was founded by Sir George Grey, that pro-consul genius of many interests, who governed New Zealand twice, afterwards became its Premier, and gave to Auckland the library and other treasures I have mentioned. His coat of arms hangs at the head of the Assembly Hall in the present school. I went there earlier than most boys because I got a special scholarship from Standard V in the State primary school, instead of waiting to compete for a junior district scholarship from Standard VI. Mine was a Rawlings Scholarship, a private foundation, open to boys whose parents could not afford to send them to the Grammar School. The school fees were ten pounds a year. There were no free places in those days. The customary path of learning for the brightest boys and girls of the province was to enter the school as junior district scholars, win a senior district scholarship there, and go on to the University with a third scholarship. Many a New Zealand boy from town or country who made a mark in the world owed his start to this scholarship system. Ernest Rutherford and Richard Maclaurin were two. Rutherford's school was Nelson. Both were country boys. Mac-

laurin, most distinguished scholar of Grammar School old boys, was Smith Prizeman and Yorke Prizeman at Cambridge, Professor of Mathematics and Law at Victoria University College, Wellington, Professor of Mathematical Physics at Columbia University, and President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, which he re-created into splendour.

From first to last in these contests, girls were on the same footing as boys. New Zealand has an honourable record in higher education for women. At the old Grammar School in Symonds Street, the boys were housed in one part and the girls in another, and at the school care was taken that "never the twain shall meet". Officially, they saw each other only at the annual prize-giving and sports. My wife went to the Grammar School with a junior scholarship the same year as I did, and beat me in the race, for I fell at the junior university hurdle, and she cleared it. We did not meet till after our school days.

In his book *The Lighter Side of School Days*, Ian Hay describes a magnate speaking at a prize-giving. "You boys live in a palace; I envy you." There is a murmur of "Liar!" from the back. Yet such a remark might be made in all sincerity. If, for example, an old boy of the Auckland Grammar School on Symonds Street visits the present school, so superbly sited on the slopes of Mt Eden, he might well talk about a palace. To mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the school, old boys raised money to build a pavilion on the main playing-field. (Note the "main"). A pavilion! In Symonds Street we had not even one playing-field, and no one thought of pavilions. We had a pocket-handkerchief playground—a stony slope. We generally practised football in the Metropolitan Ground, which was once the cow-paddock of Government House. The University stands there today. If we did not play there, we went to the Outer Domain, which was quite a step. For cricket we went to the Domain cricket-ground after school. There was no school library. There were no pictures on the walls. The only school society was the orchestra. There was no massed singing. There was no tuck-shop. The present school has all these things and more. It was plain living with us, and I think I may say, there was some high thinking. However, while such amenities as came later may be very good for education, I doubt if they count for much in a boy's affection for his school. That affection comes mainly from the fundamental things: teachers and what is taught and how it is taught; association with other boys; games; the corporate life of the school. When I went there, the Grammar School was less than twenty-five years old. It

was building up a tradition. Its old boys were distinguishing themselves at home and abroad. Our affection for the school has been just as warm as that of later generations.

The school was curiously and significantly academic. This might not have struck us at the time, but it does now. Looking through our curriculum (and probably that of other New Zealand schools), a foreigner might have said: "Here is a country that lives on the land, by what the land produces, but I don't see any mention of it. You don't even teach your own history." There wasn't any such mention. There was a faint beginning of a "modern side". Book-keeping was taught, and for would-be engineers there was mechanical drawing. Nearly the whole trend of our education was to prepare for the University or for "white collar" jobs. The limelight was on scholarship boys and girls, and the success of the school was judged mainly by the number of university scholarships won and matriculation passes. Boys came from the country but were not expected to return there. Farming was of low account; we rather looked down on the boy who chose it. This reflected the general condition of Auckland and the province to which I have referred. Auckland farming was nothing like so efficient or profitable as in some other provinces, and its prestige was far lower. There was no well-rooted well-to-do sheep-farming class, who sent their sons to boarding-schools on the English public school model, and our arable farming could not compare with that of Canterbury or Southland.

At prize-givings university and other honours won by old boys and girls were read out. Many years later there was a lively article in the *Auckland Star* commenting on the fact that such recitals in general did not mention the old boys who made two blades of grass grow where one, or none, grew before. My friend the late E. Earle Vaile was responsible for this pointed pleasantry. Earle Vaile was an old Grammar boy. At an early age he retired from business with a fortune, and to the astonishment and consternation of his friends, applied it to testing the despised pumice wilderness back of Rotorua. The story of his success may be read in his book *Pioneering the Pumice*. Today the value of these pumice lands is realized. I am not suggesting for a moment that boys destined to be farmers should be taught farming only. The verses of the young farmer-poet Donald McDonald, a pupil of the famous Feilding Agricultural High School, who died in the second war, may be cited in refutation of such foolishness. Here I am describing a condition of the time. Earle Vaile was a well-read man, and made gifts to libraries.

There was a workshop for boys who wanted to learn carpentering, where instruction was given by our drawing master, who bore the historic name of Trevithick. He was also a naval architect, and designed some of the Northern Company's ships. Compulsory handwork for boys and domestic science for girls had not then been introduced into the educational system. I have long regretted that I did not learn a handicraft. It would have given my life a better balance and added considerably to my happiness. What girls were taught recalled Herbert Spencer's comment on the English system, that it might have been designed for a life of celibacy.

We learned nothing about the history of New Zealand. Indeed, in passing into the sixth form, lower and upper, we dropped English history and studied Roman. When I was in the Middle School the Old Boys' Association gave a prize for an essay on New Zealand history, and competitors were advised to read F. J. Moss's school-book on the subject. I swotted up Moss, and was awarded a special prize for what the headmaster was pleased to call my pluck. That was the beginning of my interest in the history of my native country. I believe geography was dropped earlier in the school. There were wall maps, but I do not remember them being used in the teaching of either geography or history. How vastly more interesting these subjects could have been made with the help of maps and pictures!

I have always been glad I learned Roman history, but I think of the lessons from Hannibal's invasion of Italy that could have been pushed home to boys of a remote sea-girt British colony. I see a master with a map and a pointer saying: "The Carthaginians started with the advantage at sea. They were the chief traders of the Mediterranean. The obvious strategy was to obtain command of the sea, keep it, and invade Italy by the quickest route. Instead, what did they do? Sent Hannibal all the way round by land and the Alps—just look at the distance! When Hannibal got there they couldn't, or didn't, reinforce him properly, which they should have been able to do by sea. And when they sent Hasdrubal to join him, he took the same roundabout route." And then an application of the lesson to the British Empire. However, one must not be too wise after the event. It seems certain that such opportunities were being missed in English schools as well. For England left it to the American Admiral Mahan to write the classic study of the influence of sea-power in history, and that book appeared at precisely the time of which I am writing.

To illustrate the separation of geography from history, I must

tell this almost incredible story I had many years afterwards from the late Professor Gould, Professor of Education at Victoria University College, Wellington. As a young teacher he was taking a history class on the invasion of Britain by the Scandinavian peoples. Gould put up a map of Europe to show the children where the invaders came from and where they landed. During the lesson an inspector walked in. "What's the map for?" he asked. Gould explained. "This is a history lesson," said the inspector. "Put that map away!" Happily, since then that poor neglected lady, Geography, has come into her own. She has been made an honest woman by her marriage to History, and sits in university chairs.

Our French lessons would have astonished teachers today. There was no conversational French. When I was in Brussels in 1926, I tried the lift-man at the hotel with the number of my room. Finally he came to my rescue: "Say it in English, sir." I said it. With one exception, I don't remember the class finishing a set French book. And how dull most of them were! I remember only too vividly *Eugenie Grandet* on cold mornings; it seemed a question which was colder—the temperature or the story. I confess this experience gave me a lasting prejudice against Balzac. We did several of Shakespeare's plays, but we never read aloud. There were no school theatricals; self-expression was not encouraged.

We suffered, as apparently all schools did, from the practice of turning quite inexperienced men loose to teach. One of these, who had a habit of blushing when spoken to by girls, resigned after a short while, and frankly told the Board of Governors that he realized he was not a teacher. However, I must not dwell longer on what seem now to have been weaknesses in our teaching. Some things were taught well. I am writing of the school as I knew it. Teaching may have improved later in all departments that I think were weak; to my knowledge it did in one. If you wanted to get on you had to work hard. Masters piled on the homework; each seemed to think his was the most important subject. Unfortunately for me, I was interested in too many things outside the classroom to concentrate sufficiently on those within it. This interest stood me in good stead when I became a journalist, because if a man is not interested in everything—or can not work himself up to the mark temporarily—he had better keep out of that fascinating but exacting profession. I spent an unconscionable time in the Sixth and had two or three shots at the university scholarship, but did not get one. There were too many distractions; I really did not know how to work

and I was painfully weak in mathematics. I have regretted my failure, for a university course would have done me good. It would have curbed my romanticism, and trained me in hard thinking.

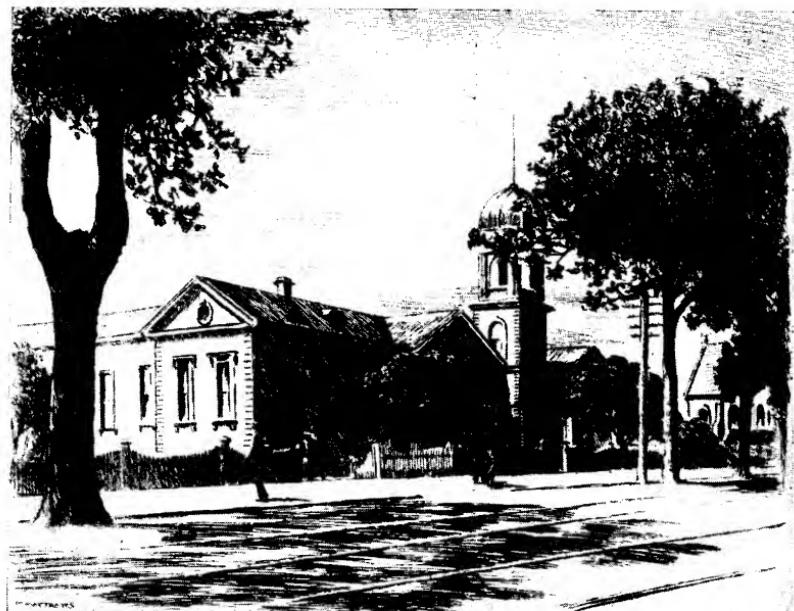
Among our masters were several men of note. C. F. Bourne, the head when I went to school, was Merchant Taylors' and St John's, Oxford. He went to be head of Christ's College, Christchurch, a Church of England school run on English public school lines. That is to say, compared with ours, it was a private school. J. W. Tibbs, who succeeded him, was a Tasmanian scholar at Keble, Oxford. He directed the school for nearly thirty years and became an Auckland institution. A big man with a commanding presence and a clear, pleasant voice, he was a fine figure-head. He spoke exceptionally well, and should not this gift be considered a necessary qualification for a headmaster? The Assembly Hall should be the centre of the school life. It is bad when a flat, dull voice, a halting delivery, and a poor choice of words, are fed to assembled youth, especially on great occasions. Tibbs had a remarkable gift for remembering old pupils, both boys and girls. A woman who, after years of married life, was forced to earn her living, went to Tibbs for a recommendation. "I don't suppose you remember me," she said. "Oh, yes, you're Clarissa Robins [that wasn't her name] and you were very weak in so-and-so." In my time the school was small—about 200 boys and 150 girls, but even after the free place system sent up the number of boys by hundreds (the girls hived off), Tibbs could still identify his old boys, whether they had stood out or been in the ruck.

Latin and English were particularly well taught. (As was then customary in New Zealand schools, there was no Greek.) For a few years in my time the chief classical master was Owen Ilbert (Corpus Christi, Oxford), a member of a well-known Devonshire family, who came to New Zealand for his health, but did not live long. A brother of Mr Ilbert's was the Sir Courtenay Ilbert who is remembered in India today by the Ilbert Bill. He finished his career as Clerk of the House of Commons. I became a friend of the Ilbert family, and to the daughter, Rose, I owe more than I can say. Rose Ilbert married G. G. Coulton, the famous authority on mediaeval church history, and is the "Rosie" of Sarah Campion's biography *Father*. Between Rose and my wife and myself there has been a close life-long friendship. We were their guests at Cambridge when we visited England, and I dined with "G.G." at St John's. Mr Ilbert was succeeded as classical master by W. J. Morrell, of Balliol, who went from the Grammar School to be head of the Boys' High School, Dunedin. It was the

custom in those days to employ some Englishmen on staffs. This exposed schools to the risk of engaging men who could not adapt themselves to colonial conditions, and there have been some unfortunate choices. There was much to be said for it, however, and I am inclined to think there should be more such importations today. Men like Ilbert and Morrell brought a breath of the great world into our tiny community.

These two men taught English and Latin to the top forms on both sides. In the writing of English they insisted on direct approach, simplicity and clarity. They were death on jargon and the highfalutin phrase. I was not much good at Latin; sometimes, indeed, I used to get minus marks for Latin prose. At the same time, I sensed something of the quality of the language, and after I left school and wrote for a living, I appreciated this more and more. However much performance may have fallen short of desire, I have always been somewhat conscious of the order and terseness of Latin. Often I have looked at what I have written and judged it by Latin, and then set to work to lick it into shape. I am old-fashioned enough to believe strongly in the value of Latin as a school subject, at any rate for those who can take advantage of it. Unless it is Greek, of which I know nothing, no study helps so much in the mastering of English, and a person who cannot use his own language reasonably well is not educated. He should not be given a university degree of any kind. A knowledge of Latin is also an excellent protection against the charlatans and humbugs of various kinds who beset us through life—the men and women who, for insufficient cause, ask for our sympathy, our money, and our vote. The Horatio Bottomleys of this world do not take in classical scholars.

We also had on our staff Mr (later Sir) James Hight, then in the early stages of a career that was to take him to the teaching of history and economics at Canterbury University College, the rectorship of that College, and a knighthood. Perhaps never in our history was an honour welcomed with such a volume of affectionate congratulations. Cambridge must have joined in, for in that inner home of economics Sir James Hight was well known as an economist and a maker of economists. There was also Mr Patrick (later Doctor of Science) Marshall, who was to be the Professor of Geology at Otago University, headmaster of Wanganui, and President of the Australasian Society for the Advancement of Science. There were masters who could teach, and those who could not. We had even for a time the traditional comic

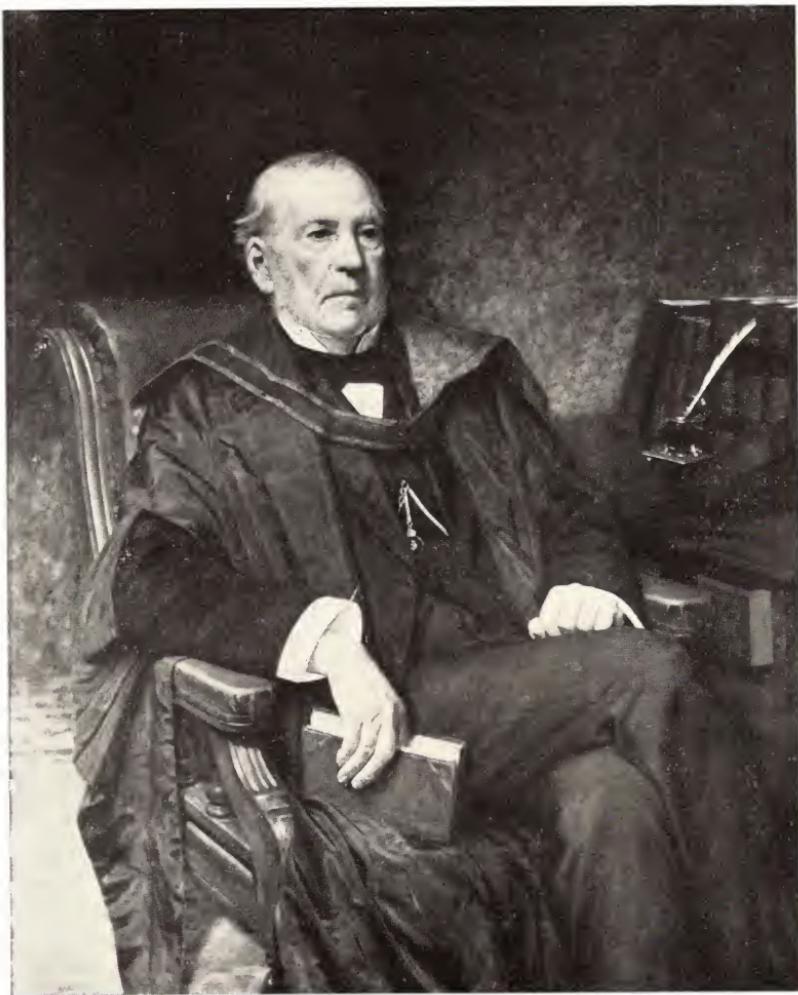


The old Auckland Grammar School in Lower Symonds Street, with part of St. Paul's on the right. This was the fourth home of the school and was built in 1879.

*Etching by M. M. Matthews.*



Staff of the Auckland Grammar School in 1893, the author's second year. *Back row:* J. G. Trevithick, G. Lippiatt, J. H. Turner, Miss Morrison, Miss Blades, Kenneth Watkins, A. T. Harrison, E. R. Watkins. *Front row:* J. King Davis, Miss Haultain, O. Ilbert, J. W. Tibbs (headmaster), Miss Wallace, J. F. Sloman. The senior girls were taught by masters.



A very distinguished figure for many years in national and local public life—the Hon. Sir George Maurice O'Rorke, M.A., LL.D. Sir Maurice O'Rorke was Minister of the Crown, 1872-1874; Speaker of the Auckland Provincial Council, 1865-1876; Speaker of the House of Representatives 1879-1890, 1894-1902; Chairman of the Auckland University College Council from its inception in 1883 till his death in 1916; Foundation member of the Auckland Grammar School Board in 1869, and Chairman of the Board from 1880 to 1916.

*Portrait by C. F. Goldie, in possession of the University of Auckland.*

French master—a Belgian, to be precise. He was short, stoutish, and outwardly fierce, but inwardly afraid of his strange charges. The boys gave him a bad time, but the girls, who were more subtle in their attack, a worse. "Miss Brown!" "Which Miss Brown, Mr S . . . ? The pretty Miss Brown, or the other one?" There were disciplinarians, and the other sort. What a mystery is this gift of keeping order! I have heard of a teacher in another New Zealand school for whom the greatest success might have been predicted. He was a young Englishman good at games, with the prestige attaching to a member of an exploring expedition. However, so I am told, the boys "picked him in one", and before the end of his first lesson they were throwing things about the room.

One of the personalities of the school was an Englishman named Harrison, familiarly known as "Gussie". He took middle forms, which needed a firm hand—and they got it. Harrison had an extraordinary knack of keeping the strictest discipline by a mixture of wrath and humour. Not only did he never cane anyone; rarely did he punish at all. His wrath, which I think was often assumed, was terrible, yet with our fear of him went worship. This sort of thing might happen: he was explaining one day that the ancients conceived the heavens as a sort of material dish-cover placed over the earth. "You lift it up, and you dis(h)-cover the earth," whispered Oliver Sinclair to his neighbour. "Creature!" thundered Harrison, "did you venture to speak?" "Yes, sir." "What did you say?" No answer. "Are you ashamed to say it?" No answer. "Well, stand up on the form!" This was not a dignified position, and it would have been highly embarrassing if the Head had come in. One reason we liked Harrison was his complete honesty. I can see him now, taking us in Nesfield's *English Grammar* on a hot Auckland afternoon. Gussie ran his finger round the sharp edge of his stiff high collar and broke out: "We've got to do this wretched stuff. I know you don't like it; neither do I. But we've got to do it." And we did it.

Thorough, honest, just, and understanding, Gussie was the ideal man for boys. He went back to England. Often during the years I have heard old boys ask: "What happened to Gussie? Does anyone know?" No one seemed to know, which was a pity, for we should all have liked to tell him what we thought of him. "Beyond the book his teaching sped." This can be said of others, too. "Better a dish of herbs where love is . . ." Better a teacher sitting on a log with a sense of wonder and a love of wisdom burning

in him, than a dry old dog working in the most up-to-date and expensive building.

For they taught us common-sense,  
Tried to teach us common-sense,  
Truth and God's own common-sense  
Which is more than knowledge.

To boys of today our equipment for games would have seemed poor and drab. As I have said, there were no playing-fields at the school. At the Metropolitan Ground a few boys changed in the open by the old barracks wall. Others played in their shirt-sleeves, or pulled a jersey over their shirts, and went back to afternoon school muddy and sweaty. There were not many real football boots. The first fifteen met few opponents, and never played before crowds. The Grammar-King's match, with fathers and mothers and sisters and cousins and aunts crowding the stands and sidelines, and going through agonies of excitement—all this was a later development. I think the fifteens of my time would have done well against southern colleagues, but they met no school outside Auckland; another indication of our isolation. For cricket practice on the Domain we didn't change; there was no place for it. The best we did was to put on sand-shoes. Cricket boots were worn by only a few, even in matches.

I acquired my affection for Rugby in my teens, but as a small child I learned from my father to take an interest in cricket and my love for cricket has grown with the years. Unfortunately, I had the worst possible temperament for a batsman. I lacked confidence generally, and in cricket I was horribly nervous. I was expected to make runs, but never got a decent score. Bowling and fielding were different. To wait for a catch in the long-field worried me much less than receiving my first ball. In a school match in which I failed ignominiously with the bat, I got a bag of wickets—I think seven for less than ten runs in one innings—and in another I took four wickets with consecutive balls. True, these four wickets were small boys, but let me have my little boast!

I bowled three curates once,  
With three consecutive balls;  
What do I care for the loon in the pit  
Or the gilded earl in the stalls?  
I bowled three curates once,  
With three consecutive balls.

My failure with the bat had the unfortunate effect of deepening the sense of inferiority with which I was cursed. It may seem

strange, and indeed absurd, but after all these years I still recollect those failures with a pang. I think about them when I wake at night. Even one score of fifty might have made an important difference to my equipment for facing life. However, if I could not play the game, I could enjoy it. I have loved cricket all my life and seen a good deal of it, from the Auckland Domain, Hagley Park and Lancaster Park in Christchurch, the Basin Reserve in Wellington, to Sydney Cricket Ground, and Lord's. At any time of the day or night I am prepared to read books on cricket, and, what has been more disturbing to my family, to talk about it.

Yes, we had few luxuries in those days. The school was a reflection of the society in which it was set. In one respect it was superior to that society. The Grammar School was as free from snobbery and class distinctions as a school can be. All classes were represented. There were sons of the well-to-do, but they did not throw their weight about, and established no set. Many of the boys who went through with scholarships came from homes where there was little money. The school gave us a pretty good democratic shove-off into life.

I have said something about the amusements of Auckland. Some of us were stage-struck at school. We learned scenes from Shakespeare and other dramatists, and acted them before our suffering families. It turns me cold now to think of what they had to endure in the close quarters of a living-room, where it must have been agony not to laugh in the wrong place. It was our excuse that we were young and a little vain. Besides myself, there were four perpetrators. Casement Aickin became one of the leading surgeons in the country, and his integrity and skill are commemorated in an annual prize at Auckland University College. Reginald Prideaux was an English boy. When he chose librarianship as a regular profession, most New Zealanders were unaware there was such a thing. Prideaux was Librarian at the Reform Club in London for some years, and lecturer in his subject at the London University. Frederick Sinclaire, of the Rawlings Foundation, like myself (but how much more of a scholar!), did very well at Auckland University College, went to Mansfield College, Oxford, entered the Unitarian Church, preached and lectured in Australia, and returned to New Zealand as Professor of English at Canterbury University College. Fred was a worshipper of Chesterton, and, I should say, more like Dr Johnson than any other New Zealander has been. Maurice Gray took up accountancy, which may have concealed from many the fact that he had a fine literary taste, and knew the classical English novelists

particularly well. "Morry" was the only one of us who never left the country. That was not his fault. He was due to fill a life's desire and go "Home", which would have included sitting in the sun at Lord's and watching his beloved game, but Hitler said "No!" New Zealanders are a race of travellers. Some of the boys who went to school with me fifty years ago scattered far and wide—England, America, Australia, the East. It was the same with other secondary schools. Opportunities for training and advancement in our small society were too few. One of New Zealand's main exports has been brains.

At the annual prize-giving in the old Choral Hall, the boys sat on one side of the chorus seats behind the platform, and the girls on the other. For many years these gatherings were memorable for the presence of the venerable and distinguished Chairman of the Board of Governors, Sir George Maurice O'Rorke, the friend and helper of George Vesey Stewart, founder of Katikati. Sir Maurice now carried the prestige of his most competent Speakership. There never was anyone more Irish. He looked Irish; at times he suggested the stage Irishman. The brogue in his deep, rich voice was unmistakable, and excitement intensified it. "This is *wun* of those occasions." His dignity, however, was unassailable. To hear him say formally at a meeting of the Grammar School Board, quite a small and tame body, "Those in favour of the motion will signify the same in the usual manner", gave one a glimpse of his larger authority.

Part of the fun of prize-givings was watching for what Sir Maurice would be up to. "As Shakespeare has so well said"—fumble among his papers for the quotation—"as the immortal bard has so aptly expressed it"—another fumble—"as the Swan of Avon has so splendidly written"—paper found and situation saved. He took a genuine interest in the prize winners and their books. As a small boy I stood in a mist of nervousness before the great man to receive *Old Rome: A Handbook to the Ruins of the City and the Campagna*, by Robert Burn. "A very distinguished scholar," said Sir Maurice as he looked at the title-page. It was beautifully bound, with the name, lion and motto of the school stamped in gold on the cover, but I never more than glanced at it. Then when the Allies were entering Rome, and I was preparing a broadcast talk for the occasion, I took it down to help me with the geography of the city. All school prizes have their uses, if you wait long enough.

The greatest flutter Sir Maurice caused in my time was his hope that one day the school would present scenes from Shakespeare.

"Who knows but that there"—indicating the boys—"we might find a Romeo, and there"—turning to the girls—"a Juliet. 'O that I were a glove upon that hand . . . !'" You may imagine the suppressed giggles among the carefully segregated sets of pupils. Sir Maurice was certainly an experience and an asset. He was one of a large company of men who brought learning and a love of learning to a young, raw society.

While I was at school our family fortunes improved. My father graduated at Auckland University College, and from first assistant in a city school was appointed inspector. It took him four years instead of three to take his B.A. because he failed in one subject, economics. There were no lectures in economics, so he had to do his study unaided. Auckland University College was less than ten years old when my father enrolled. It was housed, as it was to be for many years to come, in wooden buildings, the core of them old. There were a handful of students and four professors; not, I think, any assistant lecturers. The professors were first-rate men. William Steadman Aldis, professor of mathematics, was a Senior Wrangler, and came of a noted family of mathematicians, including five high wranglers. At Cambridge, Aldis had refused to make the Church of England declaration, and thereby helped to bring about the abolition of religious tests at Cambridge and at Oxford. A. P. W. Thomas, who took botany, biology, zoology, and geology, found time for research, and made a European reputation. The professors did not shut themselves up in the college. Thomas and F. D. Brown (chemistry and physics) gave numbers of popular lectures. It was the rule then that a student had to take his honours in the year following the B.A. My father's subject for honours was geology, which entailed laboratory work and a field thesis. He obtained a first class. He was teaching all those five years, and his rapid promotion was proof that he did not scamp his school work. When I remember how hard he worked, denying himself many pleasures, I feel a good deal of sympathy for that despised type, the part-time student. Men and women who devote themselves to study as he did—and there have been many—deserve a good deal of consideration. The house of achievement may be more satisfying and useful if the road to it has been hard.

I was most fortunate in my father. I have never met anyone with as strong a sense of justice. He never shrank from disagreeable tasks, but his integrity was matched by his kindness. To me he was as much an elder brother as a father. I shared his ambitions, and was admitted to his confidence. The result was that

while I was still at school I began to take what became a life-long interest in university education. Edward Ker Mulgan lives in the history of New Zealand education for two things. He was largely responsible for the introduction of teachers' grading. Under the old system of appointment by Education Boards and School Committees, the door was wide open to wire-pulling. It is contended that the grading system is too rigid, and encourages pot-hunting; that is to say, teachers are tempted to work not exclusively for the good of their pupils, but to please the inspector, and so win higher grading marks. Had he lived, my father would probably have admitted some disappointment. Secondly, he was the first, or one of the first, to break down the old conception of a school inspector as a visitor to be feared by pupils and teachers—rather an ogre. He put both parties at their ease, and quickly made teachers realize he was their friend and counsellor. He was more than liked; he was loved. A Protestant himself, he got on exceedingly well with the teachers in the Catholic schools he inspected. At one school the parish priest introduced him thus to the assembled staff: "There you are, Mr Mulgan; there's Sister Teresa, Sister . . . , Sister . . . (and so on)—Arll th' saints in th' calendar, so you can do your worrst!" I believe he made history by obtaining permission for some of the teaching sisters in Christchurch to attend university classes in science. He spent much of his spare time writing to teachers who asked for advice. As a young man he had a splendid physique, but he died in his early sixties, and I feel sure that this was partly caused by devotion to duty. During his last ten years he was Chief Inspector of Schools for the Auckland district, the largest in New Zealand, and he was offered the post of Assistant-Director of Education for the Dominion, but his health was then failing, and he had to decline.

My father was Victorian in his trust in education as an instrument of progress. When he called at Colombo on a trip to England, he was shocked by this glimpse of the swarming and importunate East, and said he would like to put these people to school. I replied with Kipling's verses about "a fool lies here who tried to hustle the East". He was more right than I, because the East is hustling itself towards universal education. However, he died in 1920, when we were living in the glowing promise of peace after victory, so he did not have to face the deeper and more searching doubts about the old educational faiths and their fruits, which have marked the last thirty years.

My years at the Grammar School were the end of an era. The

school was a colonial institution in a society that was more emphatically and visibly colonial than it is now. When I say "colonial" I mean it in the frontier sense of the word. Our curriculum was English, but we were colonials and conscious of it. Not that our society was content to accept everything British without demur. There was some criticism of the Old Country and its ways. At school I got my first shock over the common use of the word "Home" to mean Britain and particularly England, when Fred Sinclaire said to me that his home was New Zealand and if there was to be a home away from home, it was Ireland, not England. By "Ireland" he meant Nationalist Ireland.

However, New Zealanders did accept English institutions and values with much less questioning than in later years. There was hardly any local literature, and what there was of it was little read. A stir of interest was caused by the appearance of Reeves's *Long White Cloud*, now a classic history of New Zealand, among our school prizes. Art meant pictures in the Royal Academy, then under the Leighton-Tadema spell. The Irish Question excited many people, and I think if New Zealanders could have voted on the issue they would have carried Home Rule. New Zealand governed herself, and for all practical purposes was mistress in her own house. We paid no tribute to Britain, unless interest on her loans comes under that heading. On the other hand, save for an almost microscopical contribution, Britain paid the cost of naval defence. Nearly all New Zealanders were content to leave Empire defence and foreign policy entirely to the British Government, except when policy affected something near to us, like Samoa.

The volunteer military system drifted along in its mixture of enthusiasm and inefficiency. Volunteers wore the red coats of the English infantry and even the bear-skin head-dress of the Guards. I do not remember a word about universal service. There had been a Russian scare, but France was still the traditional enemy of England. About the end of the nineties or the beginning of the century came the first whispers of danger from Germany. Had anyone prophesied that one day New Zealanders would fight at the Dardanelles and in the Pass of Thermopylae, he would have been put down as quite mad. In thought we were still travelling on the safe Victorian seas of progress—a law of nature. Before long history was to show that her capacity for surprise was endless.

Though, as I have said, New Zealand was not yet a nation, indeed scarcely conscious that she might or should be one, all

the time influences were working within us. We could not see them then, but we can now—little things and big things. I have described that life in some detail, not only because the past is interesting in itself, but because it made the future. Landscape and little ships, reading, schooling, amusements, contacts with the outer world—my whole environment was enlarging my experience, and though I did not realize it, making me more and more a part of my own country. What happened to me must have happened to many others.

Then, in October 1899, my last year at school, war broke out in South Africa, and on the twenty-first of that month the first contingent of New Zealand troops sailed to fight in it. That was the end of an era. For the first time, New Zealand was fighting in a war outside her territory. The war lasted two and a half years and New Zealand sent 6500 mounted infantry. If we had not come of age, we were near to it.

## *Chapter Seven*

### **PLUNGE INTO LIFE**

*A Puppy Thrown into Swim—First Money Earned—The Journalist's Life: Boredom and Excitement—All Kinds of Jobs—Awakening in Music—A Great Liberal Editor—Leader-writer Who Knew Everything—Portrait of Friends—Little Encouragement for Native Letters—A Royal Visit—My First Top-hat.*

I LEFT SCHOOL at the end of 1899, and in January 1900 joined the reporting staff of the *Auckland Star* as a cadet. There had been little family discussion about my future; indeed I had not thought much about it myself. Reginald Prideaux supposed I would teach, and when asked why, said he did not think there was anything else for me to do. The impediment in my speech would have been a fatal objection to teaching, and I was no disciplinarian. Eventually, I conquered my impediment sufficiently well to do a good deal of lecturing and to become the first Supervisor of Talks appointed by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service, but when I was young it was a sad thing for me, and for others. Speaking was nearly always an effort, and there was always a fear of a breakdown. Of course this increased my nervousness and lack of confidence. However, J. W. Tibbs, my headmaster, suggested journalism, and recommended me to the *Auckland Star*. He had observed my general interest in things, and I had won essay prizes. I did not foresee the day when, sitting in an editorial chair, I would gently suggest to an aspirant that success in essay-writing did not necessarily make one a journalist. *Sic itur ad astra*—so he went to the *Star*. I was very shy, I had no knowledge of the world, and my difficulty in speaking was going to be awkward in a job where a man has to get about among men and talk to them. Moreover, as is common with persons who suffer from a sense of inferiority, I was inclined now and then to show off. I may confess here and now that I never lost my shyness in news-getting. I think I learned a good deal about the art and the value of news, but I never acquired the assurance of the good news-hound. I was happier in sub-editing, editing and writing articles than in reporting.

One Monday morning in January 1900 I presented myself at

the office of the *Auckland Star* to become a cadet reporter. That first day they sent me to report an inquest on an old man who had been burnt to death. As was usual in those days, the inquest was held in an hotel. I was introduced to an entirely new world of coroner, policeman, police surgeon and a jury of odds and ends, all in the environment of a waterside pub. I did not view the corpse. My colleague from the *Herald* did, and gave me a short but painful description of it. I slept badly that night. A newspaper man necessarily sees a good deal of the seamy and tragic side of life. To throw a boy into the rough and tumble of this calling may be worse than throwing a puppy into water to teach him to swim. The puppy can swim by instinct. After a few weeks of reporting I was deeply depressed. I had been brought up in a sheltered circle. I had the Victorian attitude towards sex. Sudden contact with humanity in the raw, and the frank and somewhat cynical talk of the older men on the staff, shocked me. As often happens when a young fellow takes up a line of work, whatever it is, my seniors painted a doleful picture of the prospects. The result was I thought of getting out. Between school and my job I had passed for the Civil Service, and now came the offer of a clerkship in the Government Life Insurance Office. I accepted by telegram and, telling the *Star* I was leaving, expressed myself rather freely. However, my father came back specially from the country; we talked it over and saw Mr Tibbs; and the *Star* was asked to take me back. After some natural hesitation, the *Star* was kind enough to do so. I had a narrow escape, but not so narrow as the Government Life Office. I cannot imagine anyone less fitted to take up life insurance as a career.

So, stumbling along a new and rocky path, I settled down to newspaper work. I had many embarrassments and failures. The first time I went to the Police Court to report it, I walked into the dock, thinking it was the Press accommodation. Later, I gathered there were people who thought it should be. I must confess I often scamped my work. Even now, like the recollections of my failures in cricket, the thought of what I did or did not do, turns me cold. However, I think those offences arose as much from lack of experience as from original sin. Today I should be more assiduous and careful. Fortunately for me, the *Star* was a very kindly office. In Sydney and in London I should have had short shrift, but the *Star* never sacked anyone. In those days this paternal attitude was pretty general in our newspaper world, and there is a touch of it still. We have not developed the

ruthlessness of some proprietors and editors in the larger world. For one thing, newspaper competition has never been so fierce.

There were compensations for the kicks of life. There was salary—a whole golden sovereign for a week's work. To a youngster who had never had any money this was riches. It was more than some chaps got. One friend of mine started as an office boy on five shillings, and rose to be director of the firm. Many years later Sir Charles Statham, who had been Speaker of the House for a long period, gave me his forcible opinion of a statement by Mr Michael Joseph Savage, first Labour Prime Minister of New Zealand, that he had never known a man who liked work. "Why," said Sir Charles, "I started on five shillings a week—and I worked!" It is a long time since I saw a sovereign. Gold, I may say for the benefit of the generation that never sees it, is more impressive than a note.

As I grew accustomed to the job I enjoyed the variety of it, the many contacts with life. Much of it was disagreeable; much of it was boring. Those who think of journalism as one continuous excitement, should try reporting a long meeting of a suburban borough council, unenlivened by a single row, or a Supreme Court case hinging on points of company law. Borough councils are very necessary bodies, but sometimes—well, they tell a story of a *Star* reporter who years ago, before my time, was doing the Parnell Borough Council. Wilfred Rathbone, bearer of a name well-known in Lancashire and beyond it, was a brilliant and impulsive young man. He had recently become engaged, and he had arranged to see his fiancée that evening. The meeting dragged on. A small item of expenditure was discussed at length. The impatient Rathbone leaned over to the Mayor at the council table. "Excuse me, Mr Mayor; what's this going to cost?" "About five shillings," replied the Mayor. "Well," said Rathbone, shoving his hand into his pocket and bringing out a handful of change, "here's the money—let's go home!" A reporter got about and saw people. There was a sense of being in the centre of things, of forming a link between events and public. One afternoon when I arrived to resume reporting the National Convention of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, I was able to whisper to the chairwoman that Ladysmith had been relieved. The meeting rose and sang the Doxology. I felt almost as though I had been in the relieving column.

A reporter might be asked to do anything and everything—courts of all kinds, local body meetings, church meetings, political meetings, accidents, fires, concerts, plays, agricultural shows,

sports of all kinds. If you were ignorant, you had to learn. In my first week I had to report a bowling tournament, though I had never been on the green. I had never seen a golf-ball hit—or missed—when I was sent to the New Zealand Amateur Golf Championship at One Tree Hill. Arthur Duncan, then a young man, was champion that year and many times afterwards. I was keen enough on games to recognize style when I saw it. Games make peaks in memory as other things do. I can see Arthur Duncan as he was then, as clearly as I can see George Smith racing for the line, or Norman Brookes on the tennis court, or Hobbs and Sutcliffe in an opening partnership.

They tried me on almost everything. Not much on music, and for a very good reason. You could pick up the rudiments of a game fairly easily, but music was different. However, I should like to describe an experience in music that was one of the formative things in my life—a turning-point. When I left school I had heard no good music, except a little of the lighter kind. I had been brought up on the contemporary drawing-room ballad, and I doubt if I had ever heard a first-class song. It was a joke in the family that when I escorted my mother to a Choral Society practice I read a book all evening. However, the Christmas after leaving school I had a mind to go to the annual performance of *Messiah* by the same Choral Society. It was a revelation. The prelude to the first solo, "Comfort Ye", and then the solo itself, opened up a new world of beauty. The whole performance, my first contact with great music, moved me profoundly. I experienced an aesthetic and spiritual change that seemed to send me on in a great bound. That lovely opening of the strings, drifting into consciousness, as it were, from another existence, has been with me ever since. The performance was not only beauty in itself; it led me to many other manifestations of beauty in the same medium. My appreciation of good music is not nearly so wide or understanding as that of many of my friends, but I think it plumbs some depths. I owe my start in this to *Messiah*, and a host of other people must have had a similar experience.

In those days newspapers were more concerned with little things than they are now. A lot of local news was covered, such as church soirées, that is ignored today. The whole conception of news, however, was narrower. There were fewer of what the newspaper man calls features. We did much less for what are considered to be special interests of women. Interviews were not so common. Indeed, one old hand on the *Star* claimed to have brought in the first interview, and said the sub-editor was a bit

suspicious of it. Reports were longer and not headed and cross-headed and separated out to the present extent. Reporting and editorial writing were more conventional. "Journalese" was more common and, speaking generally, I should say newspapers were less bright. There was only one telephone in the office to serve both the literary and commercial sides. Then one afternoon we had trouble getting publication of an accident in the Waitakeres, and the literary staff was given a telephone of its own.

If editorial writing was more conventional, including a liberal use of the "we", it hit harder. Indeed, the farther you go back in New Zealand journalism, and I think it is the same elsewhere, the more you are reminded of the young man who applied to John Morley for a job on the *Pall Mall Gazette*. What qualifications had he? "Invective." "What sort of invective?" "General invective." This, for example, from a goldfields paper in the days of provincial government: "We can hardly believe so influential a demonstration will be trifled with, even by the miserable shufflers who misgovern the province; but if an infatuated blindness to the consequences of their present conduct should lead them to disregard the just demands of the memorialists, we tremble when we anticipate the action of the insulted and maltreated people." And here is the same paper, the *Tuapeka Times*, rebuking a reptile contemporary: "The editor of the *Bruce Herald*, harmless beldam that he is, shrieks more discordantly than ever this week. . . ."

That our newspapers today are more moderate in their comment may be because we are better mannered, but it may also be because we do not hold our convictions so strongly, or because journalists are more timid. Of recent years it has been said in the Labour Party that social legislation never had the support of the New Zealand Press. This has been part of an attempt to suggest that before 1935, when Labour took office, New Zealanders lived in misery. Persistent mention of the depression of the thirties by Labour candidates in the election of 1949 brought this comment from a contemporary of mine. "What has become of our old New Zealand when most of us were certainly 'poor beyond denying'? I was born during a terrible slump I believe, but my recollection is of high spirits, and independence, wit and gaiety. Money was never mentioned except when necessary." The charge against the Press is a serious distortion of history, and is plain nonsense. The Liberal-Labour Governments of Ballance, Seddon and Ward had a strong Press. The principal papers behind these leaders were the *Star* in Auckland, the *New Zealand Times* in Wellington, the *Lyttelton Times* in Christchurch, and the *Evening Star* in

Dunedin. The two outstanding editors on the Liberal-Labour side were Thomson Leys of the *Auckland Star* and Samuel Saunders of the *Lyttelton Times*. They were in Seddon's confidence and backed him with all their might. Seddon made a practice of seeing Mr Leys when he came to Auckland, and there was many a discussion in the editor's room. Thomson Leys had learned his liberalism from Sir George Grey. He went with Grey to the Federal Convention in Australia in 1890. The old man had just succeeded in putting adult male suffrage into New Zealand. Mr Leys told me Grey brought this up at the Convention so frequently that one evening he suggested to him that he might be overdoing it. Grey replied that he meant to keep at it; he knew what he was about. Eventually Australia adopted the one-man-one-vote, and Grey from New Zealand was the man most responsible.

Thomson Leys, editor of the *Auckland Star* for forty years, was an exceptionally able man with a high sense of public duty. He was an English Midlander, but the son of a Scot. Like a good many others who succeeded in New Zealand journalism, Thomson Leys started as a compositor. Both he and Sir Henry Brett, principal proprietor of the *Star*, gave to the city liberally in money and personal service. Thomson Leys supplemented generously his brother William's endowment of the Leys Institute in Ponsonby, and watched over its growth for the rest of his life. His son, Sir Cecil Leys, and daughter, Mrs Selwyn Upton, carried on the good work after him. Mr Leys was a student to the end. He did much for the public libraries in Auckland and throughout New Zealand, helping to raise their standards and the status of librarians, and was for some years Chairman of the Auckland University College Council. He had the Scot's love of learning, and the Scot's freedom from snobbery. I owed him much, especially in my later years, when I was his editorial assistant. Both he and Henry Brett, however, were immigrants. So were most leaders in those days; Ballance was Irish; Seddon, English; Ward, Australian; Massey, Irish. New Zealand did not get a native-born Prime Minister till 1925.

One of our senior reporters was James Cowan, whom I have mentioned in connection with shipping. Cowan was born on the Waikato frontier, actually on the site of the battle of Orakau, which gave New Zealand its best-known and most inspiring story of Maori courage and fortitude.

For some years after Orakau it was death for a white man to cross the frontier into "King" territory. Armed constabulary

were stationed there and settlers kept their guns ready. Cowan loved the Maori and knew him intimately. In later years he made a name for himself by his official history of the Maori wars, and other books. That history was undertaken by the Massey Government at the suggestion of Mr Leys, another debt the community owed him. It was belated, for the last shots in the wars had been fired as far back as 1872, but just in time. There were veterans of both sides still alive, including a survivor of the disastrous British charge against the Maori fortifications at Ohaeawai away back in 1845. For the purpose of his history Cowan interviewed these veterans (some of them he knew already), and visited every battlefield. Cowan was a great special writer. The *Star* sent him to Rotorua for the gathering of Maoris to meet the Duke of Cornwall and York, afterwards King George V, in 1901. It was the last big assembly of the old-time Maori, veterans of the wars and aged men who dated to the days of cannibalism. Cowan got priceless copy. It is said this gathering was responsible for the ultimate extinction of the huia, because the chiefs ravaged its remaining forest homes to obtain its feathers for their ceremonial dress.

About the time I joined, the *Star* received a very remarkable recruit in Joseph Penfound Grossmann, who was to be a leader-writer for many years. Grossmann's father was a Polish Jew, and his mother a Cornish evangelical. In education he was a product of Christ's College, Christchurch, and Canterbury University College. Grossmann took all knowledge for his sphere. I have known many versatile men, but never anyone his equal. He seemed to have read the whole of the world's best literature from the Greeks to the present day, but he would turn in the highest spirits from Plato or Schiller or Swinburne or Browning to quote Gilbert and Sullivan, P. G. Wodehouse, or the fables of George Ade. His memory matched his unquenchable enthusiasm. One day in the office during the first world war, I read him a letter in an English paper inquiring for the origin of a verse beginning, "And ye shall die before your thrones be won." With shining eyes and in a ringing voice he immediately recited two stanzas of "The Pilgrims". Many a time since he so dramatically introduced me to Swinburne's magnificent poem have I repeated these stanzas and others to myself. He knew history as well as he knew literature, studied current affairs closely, and was early in the field with emphatic warnings about the German danger. "You know better than Sir Edward Grey, I suppose," his editor said to him once, and doubtless Grossmann was sure he did. He could

talk by the hour on currency or psychical research, and could make them equally exciting. You may judge from all this that he was a born teacher, with the teacher's most precious gift, the power of kindling enthusiasm. I have heard a university student speak of his lectures on the French Revolution as if he had come under the spell of a great preacher.

These, however, are by no means a complete catalogue of "Joey" Grossmann's accomplishments. He had played cricket, football and tennis, and knew these games thoroughly. He himself was tennis champion of Auckland when he was over fifty, and he was an admirable critic of the game. His powers of work were prodigious. He became a professor at Auckland, and at one time was taking three subjects—history, economics and mental science—without one assistant. While he was doing all this he was still writing for the *Star* and not abating much if anything of his other interests—chess and billiards, theatre-going, lecturing for the Workers' Educational Association. Another of his hobbies was vigorous campaigning for the preservation of our native timber forests and the planting of faster-growing exotics. In those days New Zealanders needed a sharp reminder of their wastefulness and lack of foresight in forest policy. It is not surprising that one of the worst things Grossmann could say of a man was that he was a terrible example of the results of specialization. He used to tell of an Englishman he had met who specialized in two species of lepidoptera, which were found in only one country—Iceland. I share his view, particularly when the specialization is early. A specialist has been defined as one who knows more and more about less and less, until he knows everything about nothing. However, the specialist might retort that the journalist is one who knows less and less about more and more, till he knows nothing about everything.

I learned a lot from Grossmann, especially in later years, when I associated with him almost daily. In the strictest sense he was an Australian, but he had come to New Zealand at the age of five and lived here ever since. He was a New Zealander in up-bringing, background and thought, the first formative influence of the kind I had met. Moreover, as a Canterbury man, he brought to me a breath of the unknown New Zealand. He was one of many who broke down my prejudices and enlarged my knowledge.

Another was the father of one of my school chums, with whose family I was fortunate enough to make a life-long friendship. This was Samuel Gray, of Mt Eden, for many years Clerk of the Borough. He left England when he was about of age, newly



The author as a young reporter on the *Auckland Star*,  
about 1904.



Golden Wedding: Alan and Marguerita Mulgan (1907-1957) in their home at York Bay, Wellington, April 1957.

*Cecil Manson, photograph.*

married, and invested in a bush farm at Normanby, in Taranaki. This was in 1881, during the first great depression, and he lost his money. That Taranaki country has long passed out of the living and dead timber stages, and, with its patterned prosperous dairy-farms, grows more and more like an English shire. Mr Gray moved north to Auckland and held several commercial posts until he found something much better suited to his exceptional ability—the clerkship of a new and important suburban borough. I had come to know the family of four girls and three boys long before that. Until later years Mr Gray's income must have been small, but a household happier, more homogeneous, more companionable among its members and with guests, I have never known. It was a gay circle with an insatiable interest in everything under the sun, from politics and books to games. The three boys, Maurice, Alan and Arthur, played senior Rugby, and their father and sisters walked out to Potter's Paddock on Saturday afternoons to barrack for them. Maurice and Arthur were good cricketers, and the three of them made up a vast repository of sporting history. Gray senior would weigh in with recollections of Lennie Stokes, greatest of English centre three-quarters in his day, and of Jupp, late-cutting for five at the Oval.

On Saturday evenings there would be gatherings of family and young friends round the fire or the piano, and, as always, endless talks bubbling with zest and wit. Mr Gray liked nothing so much as talk, and he was perfect in his attitude towards the young guest. He had much information and comment to give, but his manner was never didactic or dominating, and no matter how young and inexperienced you were, he drew you out. Mrs Gray said comparatively little, but even when she did not express her kindness you felt it. Behind the scenes her guidance was wise and strong as well as devoted. All the Grays were readers. If you were a Gilbert and Sullivan "fan", they embraced you metaphorically. If you liked the Somerville-Ross stories, you were kissed on the other cheek. If you were devoted to Jane Austen, that settled everything. If they did not like this or that they said so, and generally there was a good reason for the opinion, but the note of their lives was enthusiasm—enthusiasm for books and people, for all the drama of life, for family and friends, for a lively comment in a letter or a noble passage of English prose, for a flying three-quarters as well as for a galloping or majestically moving line of verse. The sort of domestic joke they appreciated, and heightened by the telling, concerned a door-to-door salesman who, in the early days of radio, tried to sell them

a set. No, they didn't want a radio. To more salesman pressure they replied quite firmly. The disappointed salesman paused for a moment, and then said hopefully, "Could you do with some clothes pegs?" They bought some.

This enthusiasm has never flagged. It is part of the pull that "Ellamore" has exerted on a wide circle through the years. Friends from far and near have gone there whenever they could. For many years after my return to Auckland I hardly missed a Sunday. Mr and Mrs Gray died a good while ago, but "Ellamore" remains. It is still a homing place for their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and gives the old welcome to friends and their families. My own children and grandchildren are in the circle. The house is richer in memories than any I know. There, through all the changes of time and fate, a genius for friendship has flourished, to make life not only sweeter and lovelier, but stronger.

It was a household of mixed origin and allegiance. Like myself, all the children were born in New Zealand of Homeland parents. Mr and Mrs Gray influenced their children without dominating them. Through personal memories and a host of books, the call of England was there, but the family grew up good New Zealanders. Mr Gray was an English Liberal of the Gladstone and Asquith school. He was particularly interested in politics, history and biography, and his chief regret was that he had missed a political career. His favourite novelists were Scott and Thackeray. In his sober English fashion he worshipped Scott as devotedly as the most perfervid Scotsman does Burns, with the difference that his feelings went round by his head. *The Antiquary* was his favourite, and at one period he read it once a year. He was a man of deeply religious but unorthodox faith. He loved the Bible and the Prayer Book and read them to his children. I remember his saying he did not know if the Bible was inspired, but he was sure the Prayer Book was. In politics Gladstone was his hero. I had a lot to learn there. To the Johnstons, Gladstone was a calamity. Had he not disestablished the Irish Church, surrendered to the Boers, been partly responsible for Gordon's death, and tried to give Ireland Home Rule? From Mr Gray and Mr Grossmann I began to learn some Irish history.

In truth I was a callow young Conservative and a bit of a snob. The joke about my job on the *Star* was that to my people the *Star* was a "Labour rag", read only by what was then known as the working-class. How little many of us knew about social conditions! As a boy I had witnessed protests among Parnell shop-

keepers against the regulation of hours. I have mentioned what shop hours were in those days, and looking back, it strikes me forcibly how stupid and unimaginative was the opposition to this legislation. In a highly favoured country not more than fifty years old as a British colony, some of the bad practices of the British had crept in, and there were pretty rigid social barriers. When I came to write the history of my country I discovered a good deal. One was the pleasant practice of certain drapers in the pre-Liberal-Labour days, of employing girls as "learners" for a few shillings a week, or nothing at all, and after a year or two dismissing them to make way for others. Mr Leys told me he had asked a leading Auckland draper, who was a pillar of a church, how he reconciled this with his conscience. "The custom of trade," was the reply. Frequent contact with a well-informed, liberal-minded, wise man like Samuel Gray, and the breezy inclusiveness of his family, was a salutary experience.

As I have said, a reporter's life was very varied. There was not much leisure, though more on our evening paper than on the morning *Herald*. There was no journalists' award in those days, and no union. There was an Institute of Journalists, but it did nothing to improve conditions. Inclusion of editors and proprietors fatally cramped its style. Despite what I have said about specialization, if I had my time over again, I should specialize more. I consider every journalist should have the widest possible training and experience, but specialize in one or two lines. I can cite two striking examples in my own experience. When I went to the Christchurch *Press*, Sydney Waters was the paper's representative in Lyttelton, the port of the city and the plains. He came of a sea-faring family, and the sea was in his blood. He took every opportunity to learn about merchant shipping and the Navy, and his circle of friends and acquaintances in both could hardly have been wider. When the gift battle-cruiser *New Zealand* came here to show herself, he travelled in her from Australia as representative of the Christchurch *Press*, the only journalist aboard. After serving in the first war as a sergeant in the New Zealand artillery, he was a guest of Captain Evans of the Antarctic and the *Broke*, on a tour of the German naval bases in Belgium. In the second war the Navy took him from journalism to "Intelligence" in Wellington, and after that to the naval section of New Zealand's official war history. He has written histories of the New Zealand Shipping Company and the Union Company, and naval war histories. The second case is Gordon Mirams, who, as a reporter, took up the study of the

cinema. He became the ablest and most widely read film critic in the country, wrote an excellent book on the subject, served a term with U.N.E.S.C.O. in Europe, and was appointed Chief Film Censor for the New Zealand Government.

In those days, with long hours and broken time, conditions for most of us were not conducive to mastering a subject. The general training, however, was good. Reporters were called on to do almost everything, and on the *Star* a man could go beyond his daily assignments. There was a column of humorous comment once a week, and we were encouraged—and indeed expected—to contribute to it. My first editorial was voluntary. I was sent to an old colonists' reunion. The gathering so moved me that I wrote a comment as well as a report, and it was used as a leader. This was another piece of my education as a New Zealander. I did not think of my people as old colonists; they were merely of the "seventies". Some of the old folk at the reunion must have gone back to the *Duchess of Argyle* and the *Jane Gifford*, the ships that in 1842, two years after the foundation of the city, brought the first organized parties of immigrants to Auckland. Sir John Logan Campbell, "Father of Auckland", and Mayor in 1901, landed in New Zealand in the year it became a colony. All this shows how young we were.

I was apprenticed to the trade of writing. Before I left school I told a friend I hoped to get a footing in the magazines. But what magazines? When I went to work I soon found English magazines were beyond me. I had nothing to say on their level. There was very little New Zealand demand for articles and stories. My own paper published hardly any contributed matter. One or two papers in the south, notably the *Otago Witness*, encouraged local writers, but the pay was apt to be microscopic. In the nineties a young journalist starting out on a distinguished career received two guineas for six short stories. Newspapers had not long passed the struggling stage, when a pound was a pound, to be looked at very hard. There was an idea that if a contributor got his name in print, the publicity was sufficient reward. Anything savouring of literature was apt to be regarded as an unimportant extra.

Arthur Cleave of Auckland started the *New Zealand Magazine* and kept it going for some time. All such efforts came up against two very strong obstacles. Our population was very small, and New Zealand had not yet found itself. Only a handful of people were interested in local creative writing and criticism. The *Sydney Bulletin* was the chief mark for the free lance, especially

the clever young man. A steady stream of paragraphs, short stories, and verse went from Auckland to that famous weekly, then unique in the world in its brand of pungent and irreverent comment. Primarily, the *Bulletin* was a nursery of Australian nationalism and literature, but it helped to give many of our young writers a start, and fostered a New Zealand spirit. However, I had not got what I may call the *Bulletin* mind. Indeed, a good deal of the *Bulletin's* contents shocked me, though I realize now it was part of my education. I was still very conventional and my prose and verse strongly derivative.

Time went on. In 1901 the Queen died. It seemed as if the eternal had been struck by mortality; only the old could remember a time when Victoria wasn't queen. The South African war dragged on. There was much more jingoism than in the world war of 1914. It might be said, indeed, there was not any when we came to fight for our lives. For some reason I have never been able to understand, the New Zealand Division in the war of 1914 has been known officially as the First Expeditionary Force, and that of the 1939 war as the Second Expeditionary Force. Surely the South African contingents of 6500 men are entitled to be called the First Expeditionary Force. Though they made history, New Zealanders had to wait nearly fifty years for the issue of a brief official record of their part in the war. A manuscript was written early, but lay in the archives unpublished, and unofficial accounts were scanty. This made a deplorable gap in our national records. There has been little popular knowledge of what happened. How many New Zealanders, for instance, know the story of New Zealand Hill? Here again is illustrated the weakness of our national feeling. Neither Government nor people saw the need for writing local history. James Busby's Residency at Waitangi in the Bay of Islands, outside which the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840, granting sovereignty to Britain, was the most historic house in New Zealand. Not until thirty years after the South African war was the Treaty House, as it is called, preserved (with an ample estate) for the nation, and then not by the Government, but through the historical sense and generosity of the Governor-General, Lord Bledisloe, and Lady Bledisloe. Only in our centennial year, 1940, did we really wake up to the value of our history and the need for recording it.

The Duke of Cornwall and York, afterwards George V, and the future Queen Mary, visited New Zealand in 1901, and the younger generation saw Royalty for the first time. The landing in Auckland provided other sights new to the simple colonials—

the splendour of the Household Cavalry's full uniform, and "Dick" Seddon, our Prime Minister, big and stout, in a Privy Councillor's white knee-breeches and stockings, gold-laced tail-coat and cocked hat. No one paid any attention to a young reporter wearing his first top-hat. On the eve of the landing the instruction went out that all our reporters covering the functions were to wear tails and top-hats, and, if necessary, the office would provide the hats. I could borrow my father's tail-coat, but there was no top-hat in the family. Fred Clarke, afterwards managing editor, and I went round the shops for hats. Fred had an average-sized head (and a wise one), so he got one "on the house". My exceptionally large head ruled me out. However, I found my size in a venerable topper that the city's specialist hatter hired out to cabbies for funerals and weddings, and he let me have it for the great occasion. I must have looked darned funny—and I knew it. However, I was to learn in later years that the hiring of festive garments was not unusual. Quite a number of New Zealanders visiting England have hired hats and coats from Mr Moss for various occasions, including Buckingham Palace garden-parties. It was part of Bert Drew's job, the Publicity Officer at New Zealand House in later days, to see they were properly fitted out. He sent me to Mr Moss for evening-dress tails.

The year 1904, and I thought it was time I made a move for more experience. The *Press*, Christchurch, wanted a reporter, preferably with some commercial experience. I found out later that they had the Addington stock markets in mind. I had not had any such experience, but I applied, and among specimens of my work included some verse. This amused W. H. Graham, the acting-editor, who was to be a good friend. He said he had asked for a man who knew something about pigs and I sent them poetry. Well, pigs and poetry illustrate the range of journalism. It is not at all impossible for a journalist to be called on to deal with the two subjects on the same day. This fell to my lot when I was Supervisor of Talks in broadcasting. Despite my country upbringing, I could not tell a Tamworth from a Berkshire, but I was supposed to know something about putting the stuff across. I helped the Department of Agriculture to lick pig production talks into shape. On the same day, more than once, I wrote a script on poetry, or edited one. Variety is the spice of life.

## *Chapter Eight*

### NIGHT WATCHES IN CHRISTCHURCH

*City of the Plains, and Alps—Rigours and Joys of Night Work—Knocked Over by a Police Sergeant—A Literary Atmosphere—Rise and Fall of Newspapers—Canterbury's English Stamp—Family, Land, and Church—The General and the Corporal—Introduction to High Country—Strong Radicalism of Christchurch.*

THE CHANGE FROM AUCKLAND TO CHRISTCHURCH (or from Christchurch to Auckland) is still the most marked in the world formed by our four main centres. Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin lie on hills by the sea, and Auckland has more of the sea in its blood than Wellington or Dunedin. Christchurch is an inland city, though its eastern suburbs have spread to the sea. Except for a fringe of settlement on the Port Hills from Cashmere to Sumner, it is as flat as flat can be. Its port lies a few miles away, on the other side of those hills. In 1904 I was leaving home for the first time, and for reasons I have touched on, the business of travelling from north to south was more exciting than it is now. I knew that Christchurch was an organized English foundation. It had a school that resembled the public schools of England, and a University College that suggested Oxford and Cambridge. It was a cathedral city with a real cathedral, not a pro-cathedral or a cathedral church. Canterbury was a province of Alps and sheep-kings.

I found in Christchurch all and more of the contrast I had expected. There was the regular lay-out of the city. There were the tree-lined streets and squares; the scholastic quarter with its suggestion of haunts of ancient peace; the more solid and impressive architecture of public buildings; the general air of mellowness and serenity. The contrast between the stone Gothic of Canterbury University College and the old wooden buildings of Auckland University College in a back street was impressive and painful. I was lucky enough to get lodgings right away in Cranmer Square, which, like its brother, Latimer, is close to the centre of the city. These names are significant. When I go back to Cranmer Square I can taste again the flavour of that novelty—

the trees, the enclosed grass, the surrounding houses in their gardens, the neighbourhood of Hagley Park and the Avon, the beauty and dignity of schools, University and Museum. Then the distant glories! It was a misty day when I arrived, and you could not see far across the plains. A few days later I suddenly caught sight of a high white line in the west. With a shock of wonder and delight, I realized I was looking at the Southern Alps for the first time. Moreover, I was looking at them along a city street. Later I came to know Arnold Wall's lines on Christchurch:

Each of her streets is closed with shining Alps,  
Like Heaven at the end of long plain lives.

Of course before long they took me to Cashmere Hills to see "the vision splendid of the sunlit plain extended", backed by a mighty horizon of mountains—one of the world's greatest views of the kind.

I mean to say more about Christchurch and Canterbury, but these impressions did not come all at once, so I had better deal first with my newspaper work. I had a week or two reporting for the *Press*, and was then taken inside permanently. (This newspaper always referred to itself as *The Press*, not the *Press* and the one other paper to which it accorded the distinction of the definite article was *The Times*.) I had worked on an evening paper; this was a morning one. Have you ever thought about those who work to provide you with a breakfast-table newspaper? Has it occurred to you that quite a number of people must turn night into day to give you the printed news, and that they do this as a routine, not week or month about, but all through the year? Reporters are apt to keep late hours, but they often go to bed at a Christian time. A morning-paper editor may reach home before midnight. However, there must be a sub-editing staff to work from early evening right through till after midnight, and with them are proof-readers, compositors, printers, men to cast the pages for the printing machine, and—last shift—machinists and publishers. One is often disposed to say it is a dog's life, this continuous night work. So it is, but men have kept at it for years and lived to a good old age. I lived this life for over eleven years. It meant starting at seven or eight in the evening, going on till two in the morning or later, and getting to bed as late as four. Today morning papers go to press earlier. Often this was done without having a break. We would eat sandwiches and drink tea as we worked. More often than not, especially when important things were happening, and as a regular practice during the first war, we looked in

at the office in the afternoon to see what was doing and prepare for the evening.

It was often very pleasant to have an afternoon off, to go for walks or play golf. Over the pleasures of the afternoon, however, lay the shadow of the night's work. There are two main drawbacks to such a life. It cuts you off from evening amusements and a very large part of human intercourse. You have your time off when other people are working. You scorn delights and live laborious nights. Save on Saturdays, you play games before you work, not after. You do not like to let yourself go in exercise, lest you should get tired at night. It is hard to leave home just as the family is settling down for the evening by the fire. In Christchurch, besides Saturday nights, second or third Sundays were free when times were good, also a few holiday nights, such as the night before Good Friday, and Christmas Eve. Sunday evenings were particularly hard, but Christmas Day night was the worst. All round me were care-free families enjoying their reunion—sitting on verandas or strolling in their gardens in the summer twilight—and I was going to work. Also, when I had a night off, I could not go to bed at the ordinary time. At the beginning of every annual holiday I spent a night or two awake till well after midnight, before I got into the proper routine.

Wives of morning-paper journalists have also something to put up with. It was in those Christchurch days that I married. My wife, Marguerita Pickmere, had a longer family association with the country than I had. Her English father arrived in the eighteen-fifties, and farmed in the Far North before settling in Remuera. Her mother was born at the mission station at Waimate North in 1841, daughter of Richard Matthews, a lay missionary who came to the Bay of Islands in 1835 in H.M.S. *Beagle*. In those days we were not conscious of the history about us, but in later years I realized how much the pioneering past had influenced later generations.

Night work had another compensation besides free afternoons. I saw many dawns, and after a long night in the office summer dawns in Christchurch could be entrancing. Before I married I had rooms for a while in Boundary Road, Fendalton, near the Avon and Hagley Park. The Avon is about the size of the Cam, and the whole landscape with its English trees, and venerable scholastic buildings near the river, suggests Cambridge. After a long night in the office it was delightful to walk home in serene summer dawning along the riverside. If I had seen Cambridge

by then I should have been constantly reminded of the Backs. It seemed an affront to nature, a sin of ingratitude, to go to bed.

I had a few experiences in my walks home. I still felt a fear of the dark that began in my childhood. There came to Christchurch a terrible melodrama of the old school called *A Face at the Window*. The face (a murderer's) was appalling, so was the wolf-like howl with which its approach was heralded. (Unnerving though I found these horrors, I could not help thinking it was considerate of the murderer to warn victims and police by this fire-brigade method.) Although I was well over twenty I found myself looking nervously over my shoulder as I walked the dark, deserted streets. It was about that time that Conan Doyle wrote *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. It is a fine story of its kind, but surely a more clumsy and risky method of murdering people was never invented. That "gigantic hound" was brought to Dartmoor from somewhere. How could this have been done without more than one person seeing it and spreading the news? However, the creature was too much even for the hardened nerves of Detective Lestrade, who, you may remember, at the sight of it dropped to the ground in terror. At second hand it was a little too much for me. Then, one dark night, in a city street, I nearly fell over a very large, black dog, and my heart threatened to leave my body. After all, I had some excuse. The hours between midnight and dawn are notoriously lowering to human vitality. Did not some soldier speak of "two-o'clock-in-the-morning courage"?

I had a habit of whiling away the walk home by reciting poetry. Swinburne seemed appropriate to the hour. "When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces . . .", "From too much love of living . . .", "Fate is a sea without a shore, and the soul is a rock that abides; but her ears are vexed with the roar and her face with the foam of the tides." Lovely stuff, some of it; all of it heady; just the thing for a walk after work. But one dark morning when I was in the middle of one of these rhapsodies, a light was suddenly flashed in my face, and a policeman on his beat wanted to know what I was doing. I am sure he thought my explanation lame, and suspected me of being an escaped lunatic, but, having escorted me for a short distance, he was pleased to let me go on.

Another time the laugh was with me. At a few minutes to five one dark but clear morning I was cycling along the straight length of Victoria Street and Papanui Road. I was carrying a light and riding on my proper side. Suddenly there was a shout ahead and I was knocked endways. A cyclist had run slap into me, and he was

a sergeant of police, riding on his wrong side without a light. The explanation was that he was a learner (everybody had to learn to ride a bicycle in Christchurch), and was so intent on keeping afloat and getting to the police station for the change of patrols at five o'clock, that he bent over the handles and did not see where he was going. He asked me to say nothing. I had a lot of sympathy for learners. It cost him ten shillings to repair my twisted machine, and he paid up cheerfully. The incident taught me police were human.

My eleven years on the *Press* were a very valuable experience. I did nearly everything an inside man could be called upon to do; some local sub-editing, cable sub-editing regularly, some editorial writing, special articles, and going through New Zealand and oversea papers. We even took the *North China Herald*. Cable sub-editing gives a journalist a wide knowledge of world affairs and is an excellent preparation for leader-writing. I even did first nights at the theatre for a few years. Journalists have to work very quickly at times. They must have a good range of speed and quick acceleration. If you come back to the office from a big theatre show at about eleven you have to hustle to get your notice done in time. It was eleven-fifteen when I returned from Oscar Asche's overwhelming production of *Othello*, feeling torn to bits and anxious to do it justice. (A friend met us in the foyer coming out, with tears on her cheeks, and murmured to my wife: "We do take our pleasures sadly, don't we?")

Big news comes to wreck plans. Word of Seddon's sudden and unexpected death came in the forenoon, so leader-writers scrapped their work and plunged into obituary appraisements. One Sunday night we got news in the early cables that Swinburne was seriously ill. I was very busy and my Swinburne material was at home, so I breathed a prayer (not unfeelingly I hope) that he would not die in the late cable, which came last thing, between one and two in the morning. The late cable contained two words: "Obituary Swinburne." I dashed off a few lines of a footnote and quoted a verse from "The Garden of Proserpine". Was it "that no *man* lives for ever"? I wasn't sure, but I risked it. Next day I found it was "no *life* lives for ever". I could not have checked it, but this was one of my many experiences that taught me one of the fundamental rules of writing—and many other situations in life: always verify your references. Accuracy is the first rule in journalism.

The *Press* was a more literary paper than the *Auckland Star*. It had always prided itself on its style and its concern with litera-

ture. This might be expected. Canterbury was founded by men with literary tastes, who read the classics and could turn a neat verse. One of them, James Edward FitzGerald, founded the *Press* and edited it. FitzGerald was first Superintendent of Canterbury and first Premier of New Zealand. Samuel Butler, who for a while grew sheep at "Mesopotamia", up in the Southern Alps, contributed the germ of *Erewhon* to the *Press*. The paper liked the pointed epigrammatic sentence and literary allusion. It favoured Saturday leaders on cultural subjects. There was a Literary Page on Saturdays and to get into this was considered a distinction. William Henry Triggs was editor and W. H. Graham assistant-editor. Mr Graham was acting-editor when I joined. I much appreciated his kind reception of a young man who had left home for the first time, and we became close friends. Both Mr Triggs and Mr Graham were Englishmen, so I continued to be under English influence.

Triggs was a good journalist, but he was conservative and conventional even for a conservative newspaper, and too much inclined to take his politics from his club. His was the conservatism of Salisbury, not of Churchill. One of the proof-readers on the *Press* was an old man with strong Radical views. One day Triggs asked him why he held them. "Well, Mr Triggs," was the reply, "I think it must be because I've read so many of your leaders." Later, M. C. Keane joined the *Press* as assistant-editor, and became editor after my time. Michael Cormac Keane was New Zealand born, a product of the West Coast, the Ireland of New Zealand, Christchurch Boys' High School and Canterbury University College. He was the most brilliant journalist of my day. Starting off as a mathematician, he won the Senior University Scholarship in that subject, and took first class honours. A strong literary bent turned him to journalism. I should say Keane had more of the *Manchester Guardian* touch than any New Zealander I have known—witty, pungent, allusive writing. As a writer of light topical verse he was unequalled, but some of his serious verse was admirable. His poem on the death of Seddon is one of our best occasional pieces. As a columnist of the more intellectual kind—the sort of stuff one finds in leading English weeklies—he was first-class. Had he sought fortune in England he would have found it. A collection of his best work should have been made. Keane, however, was an irresponsible Irishman, or rather, Irish-New Zealander, and if there was a head to hit, he would hit it, sometimes without thought.

When I went to Christchurch the newspaper set-up was curious.

The two chief newspapers, the *Press* and the *Lyttelton Times*, were morning papers. Each issued an evening sheet—the *Evening News* and the *Star*—more, it was understood, to keep a third party out of the field than to supply the full wants of the public. The *Lyttelton Times* was our rival, and was the older paper. It was born in Lyttelton in January 1851 (subsequently moved to Christchurch) less than a month after the first four ships of the Canterbury settlement arrived. It also had a literary flavour, as we would expect from at least two facts. Its founder was the Fitz-Gerald who started the *Press*, and one of its editors had been William Pember Reeves, author of *The Long White Cloud*, New Zealand's best prose stylist. The *Lyttelton Times*, like the *Press*, cultivated style in its editorials, and I think the two papers maintained a higher level of English than those of other centres.

When I joined the *Press*, Samuel Saunders had been editor of the *Times* for thirteen years, which covered the period of the Liberal-Labour ascendancy. He was New Zealand born, and his father, Alfred Saunders, was an English Radical remarkable for the strength of his character and the variety of his interests. Alfred Saunders was the first man ashore from the first ship to the Nelson province, and he became Superintendent of the Province. On board ship he founded a temperance society. In his new home he mixed breeding of horses and pigs with politics. Criticism of a district judge cost him a fine and imprisonment, but he was released as a result of public sympathy, and the judge resigned. He was devoted to education and wrote a two-volume history of the New Zealand of his day. Samuel Saunders inherited his father's radicalism, and, like Thomson Leys of Auckland, was a formidable exponent of the Liberal-Labour creed. It has been said publicly that Saunders was dismissed by his directors for his advanced views. This is not quite what happened. Saunders wished to make the policy of the paper more advanced, but the directors, feeling themselves bound by an agreement entered into when they acquired their shares, not to depart from the old Liberal policy, did not consent, so Saunders resigned. The parting was most amicable. Through most of my time Saunders was in charge, and he and A. G. Henderson, his assistant, a graduate of Canterbury College, and New Zealand's first lecturer in journalism, were a pair of exceptionally able editorial writers. The *Press* could make little impression on their following.

What happened to the newspapers of Christchurch should be interesting to students of the *Press*. Publication of stop-gaps did not hold the evening field. The *Sun* established itself, and one of

the old evening papers was dropped. The *Sun* opened in Auckland, and the *Auckland Star* retaliated by invading Christchurch. The upshot was that the *Sun* failed in both cities, and the historic *Lyttelton Times* (in its last years the *Christchurch Times*) was given up in favour of its evening paper the *Star*, which became the *Star-Sun*. So Christchurch, which at one time had four papers, and then five, now, with a much larger population, has only two—one morning (the *Press*) and one evening.

I must mention one outside member of the staff, not only for what he was, but for what his class has done for New Zealand. This was H. M. Lund, music critic of the *Press* for some years. Lund was a pupil of Clara Schumann's, and a friend of Brahms and Sir Charles Halle. He was a very fine musician, and as fine a man. "I wish I had died before this," he said to me during the war of 1914. By that time, however, he had proved his worth in Christchurch and become an institution. Though feelings against Germans ran high, most people thought none the worse of Lund. After concerts the old man used to spend hours in the office over his notices. Report had it he wrote them first in German and then translated. Whatever his method was, he achieved admirable English. As for his influence, here is a story told me by the person concerned. She was a young singer who was to make a name for herself through New Zealand. Lund asked her to help him in a concert that was to celebrate the jubilee of his musical career. She took some songs for him to choose from—all popular ballads of the Victorian type. Lund put them aside and suggested others. This changed her whole musical outlook. "I hadn't known there were such songs," she said to me. The arts and sciences in this country owe a great deal to foreigners. Think of Julius von Haast in science; Karl Schmitt in Auckland music; van der Velden in Christchurch painting. This is one reason why I hold that we should not limit encouragement of immigration to British stock. Britain herself has benefited immeasurably by welcoming the foreigner. It has been said that but for what Huguenot refugees contributed to her strength she could not have defeated Napoleon.

Now I want to say something about the set-up in Christchurch and Canterbury as I saw it and have seen and studied it since. Its effect on me is a very minor matter. Its effect on our history and our future is a major one. If one wants to understand New Zealand one must understand its parts. All people from the North Cape to Stewart Island are New Zealanders, but with a difference. That difference arises from differences in foundations, climate, and landscape and products. In climate and landscape, to say nothing

of other factors, there is much more difference between Auckland, and Canterbury and Otago, than between Yorkshire and Devonshire. Northern New Zealanders may make jokes about the English tone of Christchurch, or the Scottish air of Dunedin, but these qualities are far more than a joke. For a century they have more or less withstood the competition of other forces. Radicalism has flourished in Christchurch for over half that century, but the city and many of its people still bear the transplanted English stamp: you cannot mistake it.

I have described how Christchurch struck me in 1904—the orderliness, the cleanliness, the serenity of the city, its suggestion of an older world. Christchurch today is much larger and more industrialized, but in the main those conditions are what they were. It is a commonplace that Christchurch is English, but the extent and reasons for this can only be understood through some study of its history. Canterbury was a Church of England settlement carefully organized by capable and cultivated men, who entered upon an estate encumbered only by nature, and lightly at that, compared with most of the North Island. There were no Maori wars, no trouble about land ownership. Most of the land was open to the flocks of the sheep-farmer. The more one reads of Canterbury's founders, the more one is impressed by their character and equipment. Probably there never was a special settlement in the Empire more ably led. These men were well educated and could do the spade-work of pioneering and government. That they had lived the lives of the privileged class in an ordered society did not unfit them at all for the change to tent and sod hut. If they had had no actual experience in government, they knew from history something of its theory, and their education gave them refreshment during the years of building from the very ground. In fatigue and solitude—perhaps riding by compass across the un-roaded plains, or working unfenced stations from lonely huts—they had full minds to fall back upon.

Take James Edward Fitzgerald, leader of the colonists who landed in 1850. He was a Cambridge graduate, and held an important position in the British Museum. Long walking tours in Britain and Ireland had given him a knowledge of the life of the people outside his class. In New Zealand he was immigration agent, inspector of the police, newspaper founder and editor, Superintendent of the Province, the colony's first Premier, and when he retired from politics, Auditor-General. He was one of the finest orators in our public life, and his plea during the Maori wars for generous treatment of the Maori is a classic example of

idealism loftily expressed. There was Charles Christopher Bowen, who added to the curriculum of Rugby and Cambridge education in France, so that he read French almost as easily as English. Throughout his life Bowen found relaxation in the Greek and Latin classics. "When scarcely in his twenties," says Dr Scholefield in his *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* he "threw himself with enthusiasm and marked ability into the life of the colony". As private secretary to J. R. Godley, the founder of the Canterbury settlement, Bowen rode from end to end of the South Island. At twenty-two he was Inspector of Police, and at twenty-four, Provincial Treasurer. In 1860 he went to Peru, crossed the Andes with Clements Markham, the famous explorer (an association that bore fruit many years later in Bowen's help to Scott in his Antarctic exploration), and in the United States and Canada formed friendships with many intellectuals, including Longfellow, Lowell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. Returning to Canterbury Bowen held provincial offices before he entered national politics. In that field he is best known as the pilot through the House of the Bill of 1877 that established a national system of education, which displaced the uneven provincial arrangements.

This man of "very attractive manners and quick perception, with great tact and far-reaching ability" (Alfred Saunders, the historian) was Speaker of the Legislative Council in the last years of his life. His activities varied from the founding of Canterbury University College to a directorship in the New Zealand Shipping Company, formed to trade with England, and the care of Hagley Park and the public gardens, which delight every visitor to the city. As a poet he is remembered chiefly by verses written in 1861 in which with remarkable prescience he forecast the help given by the then colonies to Britain in wars for freedom.

Such a career illustrates the quality of the flower of our pioneers, and the very wide scope that this country gave for the exercise of their talents. It was the all-round man rather than the specialist who was needed in those early days. We find an amusing illustration of this in Edward Stafford, of Nelson, who besides being Premier three times, was judged by a leading trainer to be an unequalled judge of a horse and the best jockey in New Zealand. At the age of forty-three, after he had given up his first premiership, he won the Canterbury Cup on Ultima, and two days later rode the same horse to victory in two successive races. Imagination reels at the thought of certain Prime Ministers of later days galloping up the straight at Riccarton on Cup Day. They were content—and well content—to see the race from the stand.

It was remarkable how many Ministers found they had business to do in Christchurch in Cup Week; there were times when a meeting of Cabinet could have been held on the course. By the way, you may have guessed that Stafford was an Irishman.

Coming to the work of colonization at that period in English history and at the farthest distance from England, such men were not prepared to be governed in their daily round from London, however tactful the Crown Colony Governor might be. The voyage by sailing ship took months each way, so that there might be a year's delay in getting an answer to a dispatch. John Robert Godley, chief founder of Canterbury, said he would rather be governed by Nero on the spot than by a Board of Angels in London. So the Canterbury settlement joined the rest of New Zealand in demanding self-government, and Britain gave them such a constitution only thirteen years after the country had been very reluctantly annexed.

Canterbury was at first a homogeneous settlement. The strength of such a foundation lies in its cohesion, organized direction, co-operative character, and common purpose. Ideals are set up and to a considerable extent respected, and a kind of family loyalty is brought to the enterprise. Christchurch bears the name of that Oxford College (spelt in two words, however) that is familiarly called "The House". The Church of England atmosphere was very evident in my day, as it is now. The real cathedral had a real dean, and the Very Rev. Walter Harper, Dean of Christchurch, tall, white-haired, handsome and austere, was so much like the traditional dean that he seemed too good to be true. In what might be called Christchurch society, English ways prevailed. There was, and is, nothing quite like this group anywhere else in New Zealand. Since modern prosperity began, Auckland society has been measured by money and little else. The older families, including missionaries and officials, were neither wealthy nor socially ambitious. Canterbury society has been compounded of money, family, landed interest, and Church. There are, of course, social sets founded on land in other parts; but none has quite the same combination of qualities as Canterbury—that admixture of wealth and background. Years after my Christchurch period, the wife of an English colonel went from Auckland to live in Christchurch, and writing to me about her social experiences, asked: "Why didn't someone tell me about the First Four Ships?" It was remiss of me not to have done so.

The First Four Ships were the *Mayflower* of Canterbury. They did more than start a settlement; they established a social tone.

This was emphatically English, including English reserve. Shortly after I arrived in Christchurch the cathedral was completed, and I heard Bishop Neligan of Auckland preach at one of the services. Bishop Neligan was an eloquent and impulsive Irishman, and gave a rousing evangelical sermon. I had an introduction to an old Christchurch family. Its members were kind to a young stranger, and I formed a high regard for them. I asked them what they thought of the sermon, and the reply was: "It's not quite the sort of thing we're accustomed to." There were small things that seemed significant. Till I went to Christchurch I had never heard of a private person employing a butler, and there for the first time I saw a sign common in English homes—"Tradesmen's Entrance". Honesty compels me to add that I have seen it since in Auckland.

Yes, it was a more clear-cut, well-defined, characteristic society than that which I had seen in the north—characteristic in background, manners, and ways of life. No other community in New Zealand has been quite so sure of itself. At the top were reigning families, linked with one another and scattered widely. If you were wise, you were careful what you said about people when you met strangers, for you never knew who was related to whom. The sons of this set went to prescribed church schools in New Zealand or to public schools in England; perhaps to Oxford or Cambridge. They supplied officers for the Imperial services, and, of course, for the Canterbury Yeomanry Cavalry. There is an old joke about the parade ground: "Gentlemen of the C.Y.C.! Men of other regiments!" The C.Y.C. was select. At one time, if not in mine, according to Arthur Harper in *Memories of Mountains and Men*, members subscribed five pounds a year, and found their own horses and uniform. There was a waiting list. A trooper or a non-com. in the C.Y.C. might be just as high in the social scale as his colonel, and have more money.

Arthur Harper told of a corporal of the C.Y.C. who was allotted as orderly to an inspecting English general. Impressed by the young man's smartness, the Englishman asked him what he did in life and was told "nothing in particular". An orderly-room homily from the general followed. This was overheard, and it was arranged that the corporal should join a dinner party that night at which the general was to be a guest. When they met, the general looked hard at the young man. "Haven't I seen you before?" "Yes, sir, I was your orderly today." The novelty of dining with a corporal shook the general somewhat. The corporal was Robert Heaton Rhodes, a member of one of the oldest, most

widely known, and richest, of Canterbury families—M.A. of Oxford, barrister-at-law of the Inner Temple, later Colonel Sir Heaton Rhodes, Member of Parliament, and Minister of the Crown. The incident reflected conditions of the time, in England and New Zealand. In these days of universal service and a much more democratic army, it would produce a different reaction. Arthur Harper related to me that as a trooper in the C.Y.C. he was detailed for attendance on a visiting Governor, Lord Onslow. The two became friends, but when Lord Onslow's butler found His Excellency drinking whisky with a trooper, his face was a study.

This society has always been closely tied to the land, and in this resembles the general community. I soon noticed that Christchurch was much more land-minded than Auckland. Citizens of Christchurch are accustomed to think in terms of sheep and wheat and horses, and they know a good deal more about them than the Aucklander does about his prosperity-making cow. I could see this in the attitude to the annual Agricultural and Pastoral Show. Christchurch was really interested; it knew what it was talking about. The reasons I take to be these: the compactness of the province, especially the plains portion; the closeness of so much rich farming land to the city; the fact that there is more variety of farming within fifty miles of Christchurch than in any other part of New Zealand; the longer experience of good farming; and the absence of such distractions as timber, gum and gold. The best arable farming has always been found in the South Island, which is one reason why human roots in the land there are deeper than in the North.

From the Port Hills you can see the plains laid out before you, with farms lapping the suburbs and stretching away to the foot-hills of the Alps and the high country of big sheep-stations. Indeed, you can view almost the whole province from one such point. For several reasons sheep went to make the aristocracy of Canterbury, as of certain other provinces. The open land invited the man with capital, and at first wool was the main, indeed, almost the only, source of wealth. The pioneers went farther and farther back, and station life developed its own characteristics. There was plenty of hard work and hardship and sometimes danger, and wool could drop in price and land the sheep-farmer in bankruptcy. Something developed, however, that could be called the lordly life, in the higher ranks at any rate. There was money and leisure and social prestige and political power. There were regular and enjoyable visits to town and trips to England. There was gover-

nance of sport, and perhaps a string of race-horses. It is noteworthy that the word "station" is commonly used for big sheep-farms in the South Island, especially in the hill country. It is less common in the North Island. "Station" has a proprietorial and almost regal air. The names used to fascinate me from a distance, and they still do, especially now that I have seen a good deal of the high sheep country. "Leslie Hills", "Cora Lynn", "Mt White", "Mesopotamia", "The Wolds", "Horsley Downs", "The Grampians", "Orari Gorge", "Mt Peel", "Braemar", and "Benmore"—they have an atmosphere. Another point is that there are no mountain passes in the North Island—at any rate, none named and commonly referred to. There are many passes in the South Island—not only mountain passes, but traffic ways, such as Lindis Pass and Burke's Pass, Arthur's Pass, and Lewis Pass. What music there is in the word "Lindis"! It is said this "Lindis" comes from Lindisfarne, the Holy Island off the coast of Northumberland, but the name has another link with the Homeland:

And dark against day's golden death  
She moved where Lindis wandereth,  
My sonne's fair wife, Elizabeth.

It is a curious association, that of a river in flat Lincolnshire with a river and a road pass in the mountains of New Zealand, yet to me "Lindis" seems a proper name for a pass. This difference between the two islands points to a sharp contrast in geographical features and economy. There is an undying fascination about the word "pass". It suggests exploration, danger, the majesty of mountains, the march of armies, the mystery of the unknown.

The mention of mountain passes brings me to a digression. In the years I spent on the *Press* I did not see much of Canterbury. I wish I had seen more. That was to come years later, when we had leisure and a car. It was not easy to get away from town for any length of time, and several of my annual holidays I spent in Auckland. However, I had one memorable experience—my first penetration into the mountains. In those days the Midland Railway ran into the mountain country as far as Cass, and horse carriages carried you on to the Bealey Hotel, forded the glacier-fed Waimakariri, which was liable to be in flood and hold you up, and crossed the divide by Arthur's Pass and down the Otira Gorge to the western railhead. Now the railway goes under the pass through a tunnel some miles long. My wife and I had come from the forty-mile-wide plain into the foothills, then into gorges, over high bridges, along dizzy precipices, into a great valley bowl

of pasture land, wide shingly river-bed, and rain-veiled mountains.

The two of us, scorning the coach, walked ten miles to the Bealey Hotel. It was our first real contact with tussock land, which runs through the island from Southland to Cook Strait, that open sheep country which had meant so much to early settlement. Stretches of tussock sloped up to shingle slides and patches of native beech, the uniform forest of the comparatively dry eastern side of the alpine system. The bottom of the valley was filled with one of the river-beds characteristic of the South Island—a ribbon, or ribbons of swift-flowing water in great expanse of shingle. Behind the rain-curtain on the west was the snow-capped mountain mass. We were tingling with excitement as we walked through the intermittent rain. We had burst into a new world, and how much better it was, we felt, to make this entry on our feet and at our leisure! We were wet and tired when we arrived at the Bealey Hotel. This hostelry was rich in memories of coach travellers housed over decades, but we had it to ourselves, which added to the sense of adventure. We felt, as one often does travelling, that the service had been set up for our special benefit. Sitting that evening by a big fire, having dined well, we experienced that rare feeling of really deep content which comes from physical well-being joined to mental and spiritual exaltation.

Next day a waggon took us over the river and a few miles up the valley towards the pass. We walked the rest of the way. We picnicked in the rain by a stream near the top, and watched mackintosh-shrouded travellers pass on the eastward-bound coaches. If they saw us perhaps they thought us a little mad, but we were sure ours was the better part. At any rate we were supremely happy. To break into new country and taste its beauty, grandeur and mystery, by oneself, especially when one is young, is a memorable experience. How much more so to do this with the best-loved of companions to share to the full the quality and depth of excitement! At the top of the pass, which is flanked by snow-peaks and glaciers, we saw alpine flora for the first time.

In later years we were to spend some time in that entrancing region. We saw it in shine as well as in shadow. On summer days the blue rock and blue-tinged snow of peaks stood up grandly against the warm blue of the sky, and in the depths of its tree-fringed gorge, the Bealey River dropped from pool to pool, inviting in their crystal clarity, but as cold as the glacier from which they came. Botanically, the great attraction was the "Mt Cook lily", really a buttercup, which, with its pure white petals, gold centre and large dark-green leaves, I hold to be the loveliest

flower in the New Zealand flora. Usually it was over on the pass when we were there, but once on the advice of a botanist, we climbed some hundreds of feet up a tussock slope, and found an acre or so of the plant in full bloom. It is a tragic result of thoughtless acclimatization, that these and other alpine plants are being eaten or trampled out by deer. Aesthetically, this is damnable; economically, because these are nature's protection of steep country, it may be ruinous.

Our first incursion into the Canterbury high country made us feel we deserved, in some slight measure at any rate, to be considered Southerners as well as Northerners. We began to appreciate more fully the life-pull of that country on the Canterbury-born. This corresponded to our own implanted love of northern tree-fringed bays, tidal flats, and the tang of a tea-tree fire. On journeys north to Auckland from Christchurch, I felt as the train climbed out of Wellington, that I could savour the characteristic scent of the North Island. It is slightly sweet and damp and balmy, a suggestion of the sub-tropical, as against the cleaner, drier scent that the wind brings from tussock land. We had passed another stage in our education as New Zealanders.

To revert to a society founded on sheep, there is an important difference between sheep-farming and dairy-farming. Even among New Zealanders, who ought to know better, the idea persists that sheep-farming consists of riding round your sheep now and then. It is a calling that demands special knowledge and hard and sometimes unpleasant work. Probably there is nothing so arduous in farming as a high-country muster. However, sheep can be left to themselves to a certain extent. Now and then, the sheep-man can take a day off, or days. Except for his drying-off period in the winter, the dairy-farmer must work seven days in the week, Sundays, holidays and all. Milking cannot be shirked. This means that the sheep-farmer has a good deal more leisure. It is one of the factors that have caused sheep-farming to be considered a "gentlemanly" pursuit. If the sheep-farmer is impressed by the fact that the dairy-farmer gets his cheque regularly once a month, I doubt if he often admits it. An Auckland journalist visited a Canterbury station during the depression, when some owners were being rationed by their banks or stock and station agents down to such details as one newspaper. He greeted his host with the jesting question: "Well, I suppose you'll be taking up dairying now?" The farmer took him aside later and asked him if he were serious. The poor man was quite disturbed by the suggestion of cows. Sheep meant tradition, position and prestige;

cows did not. I know one first-class sheep-farmer in the North who had to go over to dairying in that depression of the "thirties", and he loathed it. South Island sheep-farmers suffered a good deal in the longer depression of the seventies and eighties, when there had been a lot of rash financing, but in the later trial the position of their class was much easier than that of Northern farmers. They were not suffering from such an inflation of land values as had followed the opening up of Auckland province when traffic in property produced the definition of an Auckland school-child: "A farmer is a man who sells farms." Generally, South Island farming has been steadier. When William Pember Reeves revisited New Zealand between the wars as Chairman of the National Bank, and travelled over the whole country, he told me he was impressed by the number of properties in the South that were held by the original families.

I would hate to do any injustice to the Canterbury class I have been describing. If a humble North Island townsman may say so without being suspected of patronage, they have a lot of fine qualities. One of these is a sense of public service. It was inevitable, however, that their rule should be challenged. "Canterbury Pilgrims", after planning a closed English community, found they could not keep strangers out. The Scots in Otago suffered a similar disappointment. In Canterbury the main lure was sheep country; in Otago it was gold. While Christchurch has developed on some of the lines laid down, it has branched out in others not dreamed of. The old families have lost their political but not their social power, and they are still predominant in such fields as the control of racing and the Agricultural and Pastoral Association. This most English of our towns, with its old-world atmosphere and conservative social tradition, has bred very active radicalism. In my day it sent a strong Liberal-Labour contingent to Parliament, and since then, like other big cities, it has given powerful support to Labour. It was Canterbury that bred W. P. Reeves, the main architect of the labour legislation in the nineties. Christchurch has long been noted for what may be called its "anti" crusades. It was a stronghold of the prohibition movement, with T. E. Taylor and Leonard Isitt as leading crusaders. The anti-militarist cause produced by the compulsory training law of 1909 was probably stronger in Christchurch than anywhere else.

I suggest we may find more than one reason for all this: the intellectual interests that the Pilgrims brought with them; the challenge of shopkeeper and manufacturer; and reaction against the rule of the upper class. Canterbury University College was

founded in the seventies. In *New Zealand Now*, Oliver Duff remarks that some of the "entrenched minority" were more deeply liberal than most of the majority who attacked them. William Pember Reeves was born to a comfortable life. His father, William Reeves, was a farmer and then a business man in the young settlement. He took a share in and managed the *Lyttelton Times* and was in politics for some years. William Reeves was always a Liberal. Pember Reeves was educated at Christ's College, which was the local Church of England Grammar School, and would have studied at Oxford if his health had permitted. William Rolleston, a Cambridge man, who is said to have sworn at his bullock-teams in Greek when he was a runholder, introduced liberal land legislation. Sir Robert Stout, a Shetlander who became Premier, Chief Justice and Chancellor of the New Zealand University, said of Rolleston that he did not know anyone "who gave a better example of what classical culture could do in humanizing mankind". A later example was Henry Acland. John Barton Acland, a scion of a famous West Country house, educated at Harrow and Christ Church, Oxford, and a practising barrister in London, was one of the pioneers of sheep-farming in the Canterbury hill country. The family he founded is as well known in Canterbury as the Dyke Aclands are in Devonshire. His son, Henry Acland, helped to establish the Workers' Educational Association in Canterbury, and was national president of the movement. In politics Henry Acland belonged to the party that ranked as conservative, but he cherished the principle that every person of every grade was entitled to education.

All this did not prevent the majority from remembering that as a class the minority had looked after its special interests; what minority in power does not? Once when the *Press* was supporting the parliamentary candidature of a member of an old family, a friend said to me: "The *Press* forgets that that lot 'grid-ironed' Canterbury." "Grid-ironing" was one of the old-time devices by which some landholders so arranged their properties as to keep out land-seeking strangers. Such methods were partially justified by the runholders' insecurity of tenure. Big holdings, leading to monopoly, were to a large extent a necessary stage in New Zealand's development, and the monopoly did not last long. Sheep could be profitably handled only on large areas, and this remains true of much of the back country today. Small farming was difficult and even precarious before refrigeration was successfully tried in 1882, and it was only a few years later that the Liberal-Labour Government began to press owners of large estates to subdivide.

By 1906 the Government had taken for subdivision one hundred and twenty estates, in various districts, with a total of 680,000 acres. Many of the small farmers who were planted on these subdivisions, walked on to land already greatly improved. While North Island progress was being retarded by Maori wars and other special difficulties, big estates in the South Island found much of the money that kept the country going.

However, Cheviot was in the South, and the more radical-minded were not likely to forget what happened there. A rich territory of 84,000 acres in one ownership ran 60,000 sheep and supported some forty persons. Challenged by the trustees of the property to reduce the valuation or buy it, the Government bought it and cut it up for close settlement. Within a year, says Reeves, "a thriving yeomanry, numbering nearly 900 souls and owning 74,000 sheep, 1,500 cattle, and 500 horses", were at work there. The use of the word "yeomanry" in this context by a man like Reeves, is a pointer to social conditions in Canterbury sixty years ago. Since that time, the value of Cheviot in land production and human industry has greatly increased. Many of the small farmers placed on the land throughout New Zealand by Liberal-Labour policy voted the party out in later years. The promise of better opportunity to acquire the freehold was a factor. Cheviot, however, provided an historic example of an industrious apprentice who remained true to his master's teaching. As a young man George Forbes drew a section in the original Cheviot ballot, and began his life there by living in a tent. He was elected member for the district, rose to Prime Minister in a Liberal and then in a Coalition Government, and after retiring from political life with thirty-five years' service, during which time he sat for the same constituency, died on his farm.

Such, briefly and inadequately sketched, was the set-up in which I was working. In 1905, my second year in Christchurch, Seddon fought his last election, and scored his greatest triumph. The Opposition in the House was reduced to sixteen. William Massey had taken over the leadership in 1903 after it had been in abeyance for some little time. He started at once to put new life into the party, but the defeat of 1905 might well have daunted him. I was full of gloom as I went home about six in the morning after that election night; it seemed to me that the Liberal-Labour regime would go on for ever. Yet seven years later Massey was Prime Minister, and he reigned for nearly as long as Seddon. Later on, the Labour Party, an organization separate from the Liberals, rose from small things to be the official Opposition, swept into

office with a huge majority, and governed the country for fourteen consecutive years. That in politics nothing is impossible is a lesson many are slow to learn. The seeming security of today may be a wrecked position of tomorrow, and nothing is more hazardous than political prophecy.

In Christchurch I was with my paper in its general policy. However, what I felt about politics, and better men than I felt, was soon to be like the twittering of sparrows in a raging storm. In 1914 the first world war broke out.

## *Chapter Nine*

### WAR AND ITS EFFECTS

*New Zealand at War—Inherited Prejudices—History's Infinite Capacity for Surprise—Gallipoli, the Birth of a Nation—Newspapers' Last Monopoly of News—Effect of War on Relations with Britain—Colonial Soldiers and British—Clash of Social Systems.*

THE WAR OF 1914-18 was the end of an era, not only for New Zealand and the British Commonwealth, but for the world. Society before 1914, national and international, was compounded of many forces, states of mind, and ideals. Progress was conceived as a law of nature. Competition in armaments went with a strong movement for international peace. The humanitarian impulse fought vigorously against exploitation of individuals and peoples, whether by private or State enterprise. Slavery was abhorrent to civilized peoples. As in the Dreyfus case, injustice to the individual might evoke indignation at the ends of the earth. International law had some real force. Europe had developed a measure of moral order, something of a conscience. The atrocities in the Congo Free State and in the Putumayo region of South America raised a storm of protest. In the two world wars to come, there were to be hundreds of Congos and Putumayos, some of them sunk in an abyss of wholesale and hideous cruelty that would have seemed quite incredible in the pre-war time. I make this point because one has to be fairly old to remember what life was like in those days. There were no concentration camps, unless one could give that title to the Czar's Siberian prisons. The most efficient secret police were bungling and soft-hearted amateurs compared with the Gestapo and the agents of other totalitarian States. There was freedom to go about the world. Permits to leave one's country were not required, and you could travel over most of Europe without a passport. Save for tariff barriers, there were no official fetters on trade. There was comparatively little interference with freedom of expression. Commerce in thought was free. Then the crash came, or rather crashes, with an uneasy and in some places brutal armistice between—the two wars were really one—and everything in the moral order was challenged.

The first world war came as a tremendous shock, but despite the conditions I have mentioned it should not have surprised the nations. The possibility had been clear to see. There were people here and in Britain, even at the heart of things, who complained they had not been warned. That was their own fault. They did not keep their minds open. Those who warned Britain and the Empire were called scaremongers, as they were a generation later when Hitler rose to power. One reason why there is less argument today about the origins of the 1914 war is that we have had a second dose of Germany. Before the 4th August, 1914 the New Zealand Press, which devoted a good deal of attention to world affairs, gave the public the plainest of warnings, and the British Government kept the New Zealand Government well informed of the trend of events. However, among the many things that Britons brought with them to New Zealand was a firm trust in the Navy as a first line of defence (though with this often went an indifference to the Service and its needs) and a strong preference for the volunteer as against what was called the pressed man. Old prejudices were imported in some measure—the popular dislike and neglect of the Army and the curious idea that it was an infringement of liberty to compel a man to fight or prepare to fight for his country.

In Britain the Army had been treated in such a way by the populace that one could say that even at its worst it was better than the nation deserved. G. M. Trevelyan, a Liberal historian, calls this attitude towards compulsion a new and strange definition of liberty. Compulsory service was part of the ancient law of England, and to Plantagenet or Tudor it was quite natural. Though one might never have guessed it from some of the arguments used against Lord Roberts's campaign for universal service, the principle was retained in the modern militia law, which could have been enforced at least up to 1908. In 1909 New Zealand introduced compulsory training for home defence. There was substantial opposition. In the first Labour Ministry of 1935 there were men who had opposed compulsion in the 1914 war, and gone to prison for their opinions, but in the crisis of 1939 Mr Savage and his colleagues took the stand that Mr Massey had taken in 1914. This Labour Ministry also adopted conscription. The introduction of general military training in 1909 had important results. The re-organization of land defence gave the country an expeditionary force nucleus far more efficient than was possible under the old volunteer system, and the fact that conscription existed for home defence must have made easier its extension to oversea service.

Looking back on the first world war one remembers first, the personal losses, and then the quite unexpected size of the effort. The two were linked. We sent 6500 men to South Africa, and lost 228 of them. In 1914-18, out of a population of 1,146,000 (at the end of 1914), 98,950 men left for service with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and 16,697 lost their lives on active service. The troops provided for foreign service represented nearly ten per cent of the total population, and over forty per cent of the male population between the ages of twenty and forty-five. That, however, was not all. Nearly a thousand British reservists and others left New Zealand to rejoin their units, and 3370 New Zealanders joined the forces of Britain or the other Dominions, so that altogether New Zealand supplied over 100,000 men for the struggle.

History's infinite capacity for producing surprise was, perhaps, never displayed so startlingly as in the two world wars of this century. It was the weakness of so many people before those two wars that they did not realize history could so behave. They could not imagine that new and evil forces might arise to challenge the whole system of order and possession. Some of them were exceptionally well educated men in high places. They had studied history; did it never occur to them that the "Have-nots" might again challenge the "Haves", but this time backed by the armoury of modern science? "For Solon said well to Croesus, when in ostentation he showed him his gold, 'Sir, if any other come that hath better iron than you, he will be master of all this gold.'" Many of those who were deceived by the Kaiser's Germany and Hitler's had studied the history of ancient Greece. Philip of Macedon's methods of conquest closely resembled Hitler's.

In the 1914-18 war New Zealand soldiers won a very high reputation. Our Division and our Mounted Brigade were ranked among the best. I think this caused some surprise at first, both in New Zealand and Britain. G. K. Chesterton, a writer for whom I have a deep admiration and affection, made an extraordinary statement before 1914. In the good and bad sense of the word, Chesterton was a Little Englander. Discussing some aspect of imperialism, Chesterton said we should no more think of opposing Australian troops to Germany than of comparing Australian sculpture with French. I puzzled over this a long while, till it struck me the explanation might be that Chesterton was thinking of Australians as aborigines. This belief is strengthened by something a literary friend told me years ago. In a novel of Australian life by a writer in the Chesterton circle, there was a description of a cricket test-

match, and the spectators were Australian blacks. I could not credit this, but my friend assured me he was not pulling my leg. At any rate, within a few years of Chesterton writing this, Australians, together with New Zealanders, Canadians and South Africans, were meeting Germans in battle and beating them. It may also be mentioned here that there was an Australian sculptor named Bertram Mackennal. However, to colonials, the idea of participation in a great war was new. The Boers had been formidable enough, but they were armed farmers. We were inclined to think of a war against a country like Germany as a job, for some time at any rate, for the professional soldier, who might in time be reinforced by trained civilians.

Then, after the skirmish on the Suez Canal, came the tremendous news of the landing at Gallipoli. Its impact on New Zealand and Australia was essentially different from that in Britain, though the 29th Division of the British Army at Cape Helles had, if anything, a more difficult task than the Anzacs. Britain was used to participation in great wars. She had always had a professional army. She had recently seen her sons help to foil the Germans' thrust into the heart of France, and hold them back in the first battle of Ypres, when the line, worn to a shred, held as by a miracle. We had no such experience. Our sons and brothers and friends, men who had never thought seriously of war till a few months earlier and had undergone only a short training, were now thrown into a first-class battle where the odds were all against them. Never before had a landing in such conditions been attempted. We had read about such clashes, the mass of men flung into the fight and taking ground and fighting desperately to hold it. Now it had happened to us, to those men of ours whom we had never thought of as soldiers, but good ordinary chaps of farm, factory, shop and office,

Whose consecrated souls we failed  
To note beneath the common guise,  
Till all-revealing death unveiled  
The splendour of your sacrifice.

So Gallipoli brought three shocks: bereavement, realization, and compliment. We suddenly saw what war meant for us and for everybody. We were plunged into a shattering tragic experience. We had been paid the highest military compliment in being selected for such an adventure, with no allowance made for our youth and size. We were now completely brothers in arms with the nation that had won Blenheim and Minden, Salamanca and Waterloo. All this is what gives Gallipoli and Anzac their special

significance. Gallipoli was the birth of a nation. For this reason it stands apart from all battles and campaigns in which New Zealanders fought in the second world war. The mood of New Zealand when it received the news of the Gallipoli landing could never be repeated.

I do not intend to fight that war again. My object is to show how the war affected New Zealanders, including myself. However, I would like to make a few points. One is the way in which we saw illustrated the correct principles of naval strategy. After the first few months the White Ensign pretty well disappeared from New Zealand waters. I spent the last two and half years of the war in Auckland, and during that time I did not see a British warship. Why? Because except for a few raiders, the Pacific was not a theatre of war and the proper strategy was to concentrate force to meet the enemy's strength in the North Sea and the Atlantic. Our fate was being decided thousands of miles away from our shores. True, this British concentration was made easier by the fact that Japan was an ally. In the light of the second world war, it is curious to recall that Japanese warships convoyed New Zealand troopships in the first. I well remember the flag of the Rising Sun in Auckland harbour.

My second point is the part played by newspapers in giving the public its war news. That was the last big war in which newspapers had the field to themselves. Except for a government service of telegrams posted outside post offices, the Press had no rival. Broadcasting was to come. By agreement among the papers, special editions were not published after hours. All that could be put out was an extra, and that only when a cable came marked "Extraordinary". Extras were not widely distributed. So, usually, having read the morning paper at breakfast, you had to wait for the evening paper for more news, and having read the evening paper, you had to possess yourself in patience till next morning, a period of over twelve hours. There was no instrument to give the public the voice of the news-man and the commentator, day and night. Therefore news was slower in coming than in the second world war, and there was less of it and less comment. What came was in cold impersonal print. It was not conveyed with the intimacy or dramatic intensity of a human voice speaking in the home. In 1914-18 censorship was much simpler. Authorities could delay or bottle up news much more easily than when an item could be spoken to the world and picked up in a flash at its four corners.

Cable sub-editors, like myself, opened the cables and worked on the messages to pass on to the public tidings of battles lost

and won, of grave warnings and shattered hopes, of tumbled dynasties and crashing empires, of civilization's fate trembling in the balance. A journalist in my position developed a sort of nose for bad news. He could smell it in an official statement. In the second world war this led me into trouble with a friend whose English staunchness was like heart of oak. It was during the fighting in Norway, and he was downright rude—said, or implied, that I had no guts—when I suggested that withdrawal was pending. I told him he had not had my experience of official news. I smelt defeat. Unhappily I was right, but I did not rub it in.

Among the worst moments of the first war I should put the Allied retreat on the western front in 1914, when the Germans reached the outskirts of Paris; the first news of Jutland; and the bending of the British line in the spring of 1918. When such agony gripped you then, you had to wait. You had no radio to sit by in the hope of relief. If bad news given by the voice seems worse than the printed word, good news seems better. In the first war there was no weekly talk by Wickham Steed to enlighten and comfort. There were no Churchill accents to stiffen up the sinews of faith and hope and fortitude. There was no voice of the King.

The effect of that first war was to make New Zealand grow up at a jump. The war strengthened nationalism everywhere, to the embarrassment of those who had to draw new frontiers. It did so with us. A boy, with a boy's feelings, had been given a man's job and done it well. Our young men had battled with their peers, if not actually "on the ringing plains of windy Troy", at any rate, not far from there. This made us think more of ourselves and about ourselves. If the growth of nationalism is encouraged in one direction, it is apt to develop in others. New Zealanders began to see more clearly that their country was not just another Britain, but a different land, with a history and destiny of its own. It must think its own thoughts and find its own methods of expression.

Though ties with Britain were not weakened with the war, but strengthened, the critical spirit towards Britain was stimulated along certain lines. There have always been New Zealanders who have been depressed and angered by social conditions in the Motherland, especially the lot of the poor. They could not fit in with the system of social privilege, especially before it was modified by two wars. This feeling was particularly common among the young. A visit to England has pushed many a colonial to the Left in politics. In the first war large numbers of New Zealand soldiers made England their home away from the front, and saw

English life at close hand. They were highly appreciative of British hospitality, and of that vast body of history and culture which we may call the English (or if you like it better, British) heritage, but is really the possession of all British peoples. Many of them, however, could not help noticing things they thought wrong. I remember, for example, what a professional man of exceptional attainments (who went and returned as a private) said to me about a Lancashire cotton town in winter. He was depressed to his depths. Also, New Zealanders fought alongside British regiments, and did not always find them first class. Sometimes these were admittedly weak regiments, recruited from under-nourished products of mean streets, and insufficiently trained.

This is a delicate matter, but it must *not* be thrust aside. There is so much testimony on both sides that generalities are dangerous. I was told of two New Zealand brothers who on their return could not talk of anything else but the faults of the British Tommy. On the other hand, I know of another New Zealander who spoke ecstatically of the behaviour of a Manchester battalion—probably a new one—when it fought its hardest to the last man. There is a passage from a broadcast given in 1943 by that eminent and warm-hearted Canadian, Leonard Brockington, K.C., whom I had the privilege of meeting on his tour of New Zealand. Mr Brockington was one of the finest of the Commonwealth's broadcasters; his account of the "D day" landing was perfect in matter and manner. I noted down this extract at the time because it contained a high compliment to the New Zealand Army but a still higher one to the British.

"Tell us," said two famous American war correspondents. "You've been round a bit. Now, leaving out the legendary Russians, who do you think are the world's best soldiers?" Now in the brotherhood that binds the brave of all the earth I don't think there are any real differences. But trying to be generous and fair, as a man from Canada would wish to be, and remembering the number of V.C.s and the grand fighting record of the smallest and most distant of all the Dominions who call Britain's King their King, I said: "Well, perhaps, New Zealand." Those American war correspondents leapt on me like a couple of British Columbian bobcats. "Nobody's got anything on the British," they said, and before I could say a word, the Mississippi was in flood. They had seen the Guards in Libya, the Eighth Army in Tunisia. One had been with the Derbyshires. One had been with the Hampshires. And I wish that the quiet modest folk of those two counties could have heard those two great-hearted Americans almost abusing each other over the respective merits of the Derbyshire men and the Hampshire men.

Nevertheless, as C. E. Montague notes sadly in his book *Disenchantment*, troops from the Dominions were sometimes bluntly

critical of their comrades from Britain. The two lots of men sprang from very different social and economic conditions. The colonial is quick to learn, adaptable and resourceful, a born improvisor, and ready to move without orders. His society is not classless, and can exhibit forms of snobbery no less offensive than the worst of England's, but its caste system is loose, and there has never been any feudal patronage. To a much greater extent than in England a man is judged by what he does, and not by his origin and social status. Few Dominion soldiers, I believe, would claim as a class that they were braver than the British, but probably most would claim that in war they were more intelligent. For the best British units they have always had the highest respect. They are certain, however, that Dominion relations between officers and men are better than the British. Even in the second war, when to a much greater extent British commissioned ranks had been open to talent, a New Zealander told me he strongly disliked the way British officers spoke to their men. He did not mean that they spoke offensively. What he disliked was the clipped, curt method of command, as if from a superior class to an inferior. This springs from a fundamental difference between English society and colonial. In England, social classes have been carefully graded on a system rooted in history. Not only has privilege been cherished by those who possess it, but for the most part it has been cheerfully conceded by those who do not. A colonial woman accustomed to doing all kinds of housework might find on visiting England in the good old days of plentiful service, that the only job permitted her was arranging the flowers; otherwise she might cause her hostess to lose caste. "The regiment," says Trevelyan, of the British Army in the Napoleonic wars (*English Social History*), "was a society made up of grades answering to the social demarcations of the English village whence men and officers had come. It has been observed that when the ensign fresh from Eton was handed over to the respectful care and tuition of the colour-sergeant, the relation of the two closely resembled that to which the younger man had been accustomed at home, when the old game-keeper took him out afield to teach him the management of his fowling-piece and the art of approaching game." English graduations and deferences have been liable to irritate the colonial in peace and to exasperate him in war. Perhaps he declares, with appropriate adjectives, that the whole thing should be swept away, and at once. Such a thing would be impossible, at any rate without wrecking the show. You could no more so change the character of Englishmen and their institu-

tions in a day, than you could induce New Zealanders and Australians to use the goose-step. What the English can do is to loosen up their system, and that they have been doing.

At any rate, our success in war and our feeling that in certain respects we were superior to our Mother, nourished national feeling, induced a deeper pride in our own country.

## *Chapter Ten*

### “THE ENGLISH OF THE LINE”

*Appreciation in War Alliances—English Regiments Less Than Their Due—Why an Irish-New Zealander Protested—Injustice Repeated in Second War—Coincidence in Punch: “Among Those Present”—Influence of War on Values—Property and Life—Liberalism Between Two Fires.*

EVERY COMMUNITY that is a member of a war alliance tends to see its contribution to the cause out of its due proportion. It is natural that a nation should think of its own sailors and soldiers and airmen first, and that those who provide the news and comment should give them preference. In the first war the French considered the British did not sufficiently appreciate their resistance and sacrifices. The British thought the same about the French, and there was a gibe that the Americans considered they had won the war. This attitude cannot be prevented, but it should not be allowed to get out of hand. At first, at any rate, New Zealanders had to be reminded that the Anzacs were not the only troops on Gallipoli, but on Anzac Day in New Zealand the 29th Division has always been remembered. There was, and is, however, a real danger of the general achievements of the British Army being overlooked or underrated, and it was a sense of this that made me write my verses, “The English of the Line”, after the first war, and to republish them during the second.

It was specifically the *English* of the Line. It was not only the injustice to the British Army that worried me; it was the disproportionate limelight given—so I thought—to the Scottish regiments, and to a lesser extent to the Irish. I must emphasize that in family origin I am wholly Irish. I knew that the bulk of the fighting in Britain’s wars had always been done by *English* regiments. In the ordinary establishment there are (or were) forty-nine English regiments of the Line, to ten Scottish, including Highland. I pointed out in my verses that before the New Zealand Expeditionary Force had boarded its transports, or while it was still at sea, the British Army had fought in the retreat from Mons and won the first battle of Ypres. Also that seventy per cent of the Empire’s troops who broke the Hindenburg Line in

1918 and swept forward to final victory, were *English*—not only British in the British Isles sense, but *English*. I took two types of the English Tommy—

poor Tommy of the Line,  
Of the unromantic regiments whose blood is yours and mine,  
That doesn't wear a broad-brimmed hat and doesn't swing in kilts,  
Our world-wide army's rank and file—Yorks, Middlesex, and Wilts,  
With Staffordshires and Devons, Berks, Cornwalls, and West Kents,  
Bucks, Lancashires, and Hampshires, all the homely regiments.  
They're dowdy Cinderellas in their countrymen's slow eyes,  
They lack the Celtic glamour, and they do not advertise.  
They leave their story to be found by him who cares to read,  
From Minden on past Waterloo—a Pantheon of deed.

I was not to foresee that in a second war which we were sure then would never come, my elder son was to serve in two of the regiments I have named. I took two types of Tommy—Hodge, the farm labourer,

Whose fathers fell in Hastings field, and drew a bow in France,  
Who through the deadly sport of kings, and play of time and chance,  
From Saxon to Plantagenet, from tyrant kings to chained,  
Stood rooted in the aged soil, while the freedom slowly gained,  
Flowed past him to the swelling town, and left him fettered fast,  
In the land he saved so often, to the pillars of the past.

and Smith, “the child of old and reeking slum, where souls are packed like cattle, and the clean winds never come”. At the end, I asked if England could rise to such greatness with the weight of so much wrong, what might she not do if she made her nation a real brotherhood. I rejoice that since I wrote these verses the lot of Hodge and Smith has been so substantially improved.

It was not until after I had written these verses that I discovered Maurice Hewlett's epic of Hodge, “The Song of the Plow”, “which a sense of decorum, but not commonsense”, forbade him to call “The Hodgiad”. The poem is a history of the English peasant, under the name of Hodge, from the Norman conquest to the first world war, in the midst of which it was published. I felt a thrill in finding points of resemblance between my wisp of verse and Hewlett's thunder and lightning. I wrote of Hodge “plodding through the hopeless years on a precipice of care”, and finding “haven in the workhouse ward—a large and lordly share”. Hewlett said of the discarded labourer:

They shift him from his cottage door  
And send him pack. The house is tied,  
But he—he's old, his day is o'er,  
The Union takes him; let him bide.

My Hodge answered the call in 1914 as his fathers used to do, and

Fought hard for England's honour, and his master's league-long lands,  
And his own poor, leaky cottage, and the labour of his hands.

Hewlett's Hodge of 1914 knew less of "Balkans or the Turk" than he knew Greek, but he saw the issue clearly:

He made no boast; grudged no old scar,  
Sought nothing that he had not got,  
But took his place affronting war,  
The slow, the patient child of Earth,  
By them on whom a happier star  
Shone to forecast a happier birth.

The reception of my verses in New Zealand indicated that many of my countrymen thought as I did about those "homely" but famous regiments whose colours tell such a story. (All British regiments—at any rate, on the old establishment—have long been famous.) However, the same thing happened in the second war. Again it was unavoidable up to a point, but again it went too far. One day as I listened to the B.B.C. news from Africa with the wife of an officer in the British Army, she broke out indignantly: "Aren't there any English troops in North Africa?" Mr Churchill records that at the time he was disturbed by this very tendency. When General Freyberg outflanked the Mareth Line, one might have gathered from the news accounts that it was a solo performance by the New Zealanders, but when the General's dispatch came we found that his command included a number of English units. If such news is deliberately framed to please us, and I hope not, the comment should be that we are grown up and ask to be treated as such, and not as children who expect to be petted. My verses "The English of the Line" were quoted in the second war, and I republished them. I was much encouraged by the fact that in this second war *Punch* published verses on just the same theme, the English regiments of the Line, and in the same spirit and metre, only it was a cockney soldier who spoke, not a colonial. Here is an extract:

Oh, them chaps wot writes the papers 'as a mighty lot to tell  
Of the Aussies and New Zealanders and Indian troops as well,  
But it some'ow seems to 'appen when they're makin' such a fuss,  
Of 'oo took this and 'oo 'eld that, yer don't 'ear much of us,  
But if yer counts the 'eads you'll find there's five in every nine  
A-servin' in a good old English regiment of the Line.

The verses in *Punch* were very pointedly entitled "Among Those Present". I do not suggest that this literary parallel is anything but a pure coincidence.

To return to my personal chronology, I left the *Press* in 1916, in the middle of the war, and returned to the *Auckland Star* as leader-writer. I was going from a Reform, that is a Massey, paper to a Liberal or Ward paper, but I thought the wartime coalition would go on indefinitely. Real war seemed to make party strife futile and unseemly. No one knew when the war would end, and it looked as if a coalition would be equally necessary in the tasks of peace. It was not long before we were disillusioned. Our New Zealand coalition was never a happy family. Massey and Ward were strongly antagonistic. Ward went with Massey to the Peace Conference in Paris, but only Massey signed the treaty for New Zealand. The Government broke up in 1919. In the election of that year Massey for the first time received a majority which made him independent of other parties and groups, and Ward suffered his first personal defeat. He was a Roman Catholic, and a discreditable and perhaps decisive set was made against him for that reason. This was not a good omen for co-operation in the tasks of peace. I must confess, however, that the political aspect did not worry me much in my decision to return to Auckland. I wanted the job.

Reaction to victory in the war was mainly responsible for the result of this election. The same thing happened in England. A slower and much more important reaction was produced by the impact of war on old values. The war shattered these, or so shook them that people had to re-examine their foundations. Put briefly, the main new consideration was life versus property. The unprecedented loss of life in the war, and the army of maimed, lessened the importance of property as a political, social, economic or moral factor. If human life was conscripted, why not property? The only real answer to this was that it was not expedient, not practicable. However, in the first and second wars, property was drawn upon to a far greater extent than ever before. Besides, the first war dealt a death blow to the old doctrine of *laissez-faire*, that is, that the State should leave things alone. Societies at war found that the State simply could not leave things alone, and that when peace came, the clock could not be put back. And, as I have said, in the minds of very many persons the importance of property declined in comparison with life, and when I say life I do not mean only the question of whether a man should live or die with a gun in his hand; I mean life in its various aspects: good health, more certainty of employment, a better chance for women and children, education, higher standards of living, the fuller life all round. Here it was that Liberalism was

caught between two forces, Conservatism and Labour. It had left *laissez-faire* far behind, but could not march towards socialism. It had to attempt some compromise between State intervention and the preservation of individual freedom. It is not surprising that many persons ultimately found both the older parties unsatisfying and embraced Labour. In this country the Liberals ceased to exist as a separate party, but leavened both the other parties. They liberalized Conservatism and steadied Labour. Before long I found myself moving to the Left. I think that in the following thirty years I moved a good way, but I have never surrendered what I believe to be the Liberal creed.

As we shook hands on that day of victory, 1918, not easily keeping back our tears, most of us really thought there would be no more war. Freed from that fear, the world would proceed to foster a better life. One of the differences between victory in 1918 and victory in 1945 was that in 1918 the experience was new. In 1945 the victors looked back to the victory of 1918 and the disappointment and disillusionment that followed. In 1918 we were full of hope. In 1945 we had hope, but we knew more.

It is not my business to attempt to set out at any length what went wrong. We underestimated the strength and resourcefulness of evil in the world. We did not realize that national feeling, so admirable and wholesome up to a point, would become so strong, general, complex and dangerous. We were much less well prepared for peace-making than in 1945. We created the League of Nations, and then betrayed it. The difference between the tasks of war and peace is profound, and the victors failed in the armistice years partly because they did not fully realize this. In war there is the cohesive force of a common effort called forth by a common and clearly seen danger. The nation achieves an immense measure of co-operation, an exaltation of spirit, a marvellous degree of fortitude. At the time, we tend to think we can carry this common purpose into peace, but when peace comes the cohesive force is weakened, old differences return, disillusionment creeps in, as it did in the twenties and thirties, and the defeatist finds a nourishing seed-bed laid out for his planting. During the brief war-scare of 1922, I had a little experience that made a lasting impression. The Turks chased the Greeks out of Asia Minor, and advanced to the Allied-held Dardanelles. The British Government thought the position sufficiently serious to ask the Dominions for help, and some New Zealanders actually volunteered for another go at their old enemy. Fortunately there was a wise British general on the spot, who kept his ultimatum in his pocket and induced the

Turks to come to terms. During the crisis I talked to a young fellow who had been to the war. I was surprised when he said he would like to go again, and I asked him why. Because, he said, he had never experienced such comradeship as he had known in the Army, and he thought it would be worth while returning to it. It struck me as a melancholy reflection on human nature that it took war to bind men in a true companionship. Today the truth of this is all the clearer.

Another point I think worth recording is the difference between history as one lives in it and through it, and history as one reads it as a non-participant. Men of my age have had the experience of seeing history made before and during the two greatest wars, and then hearing and reading interpretations of that history by persons who were children during its making, or had not been born. After the first war I was astonished at some of the versions of the war's origins offered by the young. They formed judgments on selected documents or the judgments of others on those documents. I remember one young man arguing with me who I suspect had been reading an American apologist for Germany. Had he read Edward Grey's account, I asked. No, he hadn't read Grey because Grey wasn't accurate. At that point I came near to losing my temper.

This class of critic was to some extent moved—perhaps quite unconsciously—by a wish to go against accepted opinion. However, what struck me most forcibly was the essential difference between my experience and their studies. They lacked the feel of the years I had lived through—the atmosphere of those times of diplomatic move and counter-move, of warnings and dismissals of warnings, of national sentiment moving this way and that. Judgments were not formed then from ministerial statements and blue-books alone, but also from innumerable pieces of evidence, such as reports in newspapers, books, travellers' tales. For example, before the first war an English Liberal journalist of the highest integrity, who at the beginning of his career had staked his future on what he believed to be the truth, came back from Germany appalled at what he had observed. All this aggregate of data creates a temporary weather, and if an historian lacking personal experience is to reconstruct it with anything approaching similitude, he must be a man of untiring industry and rare judgment. In the year 1950 I read a university student's plea for good-will towards Russia. I reflect that this young man would have been fifteen or sixteen years of age, or perhaps a little older, when the war ended. At that time good-will towards Russia flowed out

in a great stream, only to meet, before long, repulses of every kind. A boy in his teens would not take particular notice of this desire for friendship and understanding, and how are you going to convince him now that it existed to the extent it did? Lead him to a library and bid him wade through miles of newspaper files? Invite him to tap recollections of older persons? Even if he did take such pains to get at the truth, the effect would hardly be the same as that provided by absorbing news and comment and exchanging views with one's fellows, day by day, at the time.

In 1916 I returned to the *Auckland Star*, and remained until 1935. I was chief leader-writer, and gradually came to be responsible, under the editor, Mr T. W. Leys, and later the managing editor, Sir Cecil Leys, his son, for what may be called the literary side of the newspaper—editorials, correspondence, book reviews, and contributed articles. It is no reflection on my good friends of the *Press* to say I found the change very agreeable. After more than eleven years of continuous night work I had a day job, from nine to five, and the day's rush was over by one or two. Save for office work done at home, my evenings were my own, and every week-end from midday on Saturday to Monday morning. I could spend evenings with my family, reading or writing or at leisure; go to entertainments; see my friends. Those years in Auckland were among the happiest of my life. My children grew up, and I had their companionship and that of their friends. By forty a man should have found himself. He should have marked out his line, have formed some idea of what he can do. The joys of childhood and youth may be more ecstatic, just as the sorrows may seem more piercing and shattering, but the years should bring balance and philosophy.

I was going on for thirty-five when I went back to Auckland, and it was not till later that I began to acquire some confidence and settle down to a pattern in my work. I overcame the difficulty in my speech sufficiently well to do a fair amount of public speaking, including lectures in journalism at Auckland University College for eleven years. Taking stock in my mid-thirties of what I had done did not give me any satisfaction. If a mouse may think of a lion, I thought of Milton writing his sonnet at having arrived at the age of twenty-three—twenty-three, mind you.

How soon hath time, the subtle thief of youth,  
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!  
My hastening days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom showeth.

Many a would-be writer has thought of that sonnet, and sighed. Yet by the time he was twenty-three Milton had written the "Nativity Ode". The only book I had published before I returned to Auckland was *The New Zealand Citizen*, written in collaboration with my father. I had written some verses, few if any of which I would wish remembered. Now, though there was a full newspaper job to do, which entailed keeping up with events at home and abroad, there was a better chance of writing books.

## *Chapter Eleven*

### WORDS FOR NEW ZEALAND

*Our Heritage of English Poetry—Applications and Limitations—April Autumns and December Summers—Finding Our Own Lines—Development of Native Literature: Its Short Adolescence—Nationhood Comes Suddenly—Comparison with America—Poet's Progress—Abandonment of Rhetoric: Poetry in Bath-room—Obsession with Propaganda.*

**T**HIS SEEKS AN APPROPRIATE PLACE to say something about writing, and particularly in and for New Zealand. The end of the first world war was a rough landmark in our cultural history. Our stronger sense of nationalism stimulated our literature, and the last thirty years have been much more productive in quantity and quality. I was fortunate in being brought up in a reading family, and taught by men who had a true sense of the value of words. Without any particular prodding I graduated through boys' books to the English poets and novelists. Thanks to my father, I knew bits of Macaulay's *Lays* at quite a tender age, and I have always been grateful for this. I suggest that Macaulay has been the means of introducing more men and women to poetry than any other writer. He has the action and rhetoric a child likes, and there is enough real poetry in him to plant the seeds of good taste. What a fine companion he is through life—how many situations his easily-remembered verse fits, and how many memories of him are recalled by events! In the first war, and again in the second, when farmers and farmhands went off to fight, and their work had to be done by others, every lover of Macaulay recalled the lines:

The harvests of Arretium,  
This year, old men shall reap;  
This year, young boys in Umbro  
Shall plunge the struggling sheep;  
And in the vats of Luna,  
This year, the must shall foam  
Round the white feet of laughing girls  
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

The directness and simplicity of this conceal the art of its cun-

ningly arranged consonants and vowels. I find myself repeating it from time to time as one whistles an old familiar tune. In the second war the unrolling of place-names in the Allied advance into Northern Italy recalled another verse:

From the proud mart of Pisae,  
    Queen of the western waves,  
Where ride Massilia's triremes  
    Heavy with fair-haired slaves;  
From where sweet Clanis wanders  
    Through corn and vines and flowers;  
From where Cortona lifts to heaven  
    Her diadem of towers.

I went on to the great poets, and many minor ones. Shakespeare is first in my affections, and after him Tennyson, Browning, Wordsworth and Matthew Arnold. I say "affections" purposely. Milton is the second greatest poet in English, and "Lycidas" the greatest poem of middle length, which I could not trust myself to read aloud for fear of breaking down, but as a companion Milton may be a little difficult; he was so to his family. In the application of poetry to the everyday scenes, happenings and problems of life, I place Tennyson and Browning next to Shakespeare. Indeed, with the emphasis on the "everyday" in this classification, I am not sure I would not place Tennyson first of all. It is not only that, as Sir John Squire has written, "the whole English countryside, the whole English climate are within his covers", but he has the right line or lines for innumerable situations from the trivial to the deepest problems of life and death. *Romeo and Juliet* is a greater love tragedy than *Maud* but I am prepared to argue that there is more of the average lover in *Maud's* "neurotic hero" than in Romeo. We are far removed by time and social setting from Romeo's passion, but Maud's lover seeing her in church "and suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger and thicker", and remembering their meeting: "There is none like her, none"—is one of ourselves and is, indeed, every man in love. "The Elaines and Enids of today may ignore him (Tennyson)," says F. L. Lucas in the introduction to his Tennyson Anthology: "willy-nilly, their own names remain living memories of his power. Mariana and the Lady of Shalott, Arthur and Excalibur, Aenone and the Lotos-eaters have become so much part of our earliest recollections that we take them for granted and belittle what a feat it was thus to mould and stamp the English mind." Some critics of Tennyson remind me of the man who thanked God he was an atheist.

Words have always fascinated me, and they do so more and more as I grow older. That the simplest words, used in a certain order and for a certain occasion, should have the power to move us so profoundly, is a continual mystery. A. E. Housman asks what there is in six simple words of Milton, "Nymphs and shepherds, dance no more", that can draw tears. "What in the world is there to cry about? Why have the mere words the physical effect of pathos when the sense of the passage is blithe and gay?" Because they are poetry, he replies. Snatches of an old song—words by Jean Ingelow—that was popular when I was young, often come into my mind.

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,  
My old sorrow wakes and cries

and "We shall part no more in the wind and the rain". That last line recurs to me again and again as I walk alone in the wind and the rain. Why? No doubt I cannot wholly dissociate the music from the words, but why all the fuss about such a simple idea clothed in such simple words? Certainly there is the pathos of parting, but when the writer of a crooner's song tackles separation is the result anything more than expense of spirit in a waste of glue? The answer again is that these lines are poetry, and poetry affects the emotions.

Poetry is a great stand-by in life. In an English radio talk on the art of living, there was mention of a man who could wait for hours on railway station platforms not only with contentment but with pleasure, because he could go through a mass of music in his mind, including all the Beethoven symphonies. Poetry and prose serve a similar purpose. You can pass the time in recollection of beauty and grandeur, and draw out pieces to suit all sorts of situations. The New Zealander does not stop at poetry from Britain. That is his basis, but into his collection, his literary rag-bag he throws from time to time bits from writers of his own country. "Rosalind has come to town, all the street's a meadow." "The hour-glass fills with weather, like a wine of slow content." "The faith of a willow in winter, or a blind hound nosing the knee." "The high white windy stars." "Otaki, that rollest in thy pride." "From the dark gorge where burns the morning star." "They played him home to the House of Stones all the way, all the way." These are some of the New Zealand lines I have put, with bits of English poetry, into my mental travelling bag.

English poetry fits many of the scenes in a country where, with cultivation, much of the landscape has come to resemble that of

England. As you travel through Canterbury and Southland in harvest-time, you may murmur to yourself:

On either side the river lie,  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky,

and at town and country homes there are scenes not distinguishable, save by the time of the season, from Matthew Arnold's picture:

Roses that down the alleys shine afar,  
And open, jasmine-muffled lattices,  
And groups under the dreaming garden-trees,  
And the full moon, and the white evening-star.

Or a sudden whiff of something may recall Kipling's "Smells are surer than sounds or sights to make your heart-strings crack"—"Like the smell of the wattle by Lichtenberg, riding in, in the rain." These, however, will not quite do. I do not mean the poetry, but as poetry fitting our own conditions closely. The Lady of Shalott did not weave her tapestry in New Zealand. Kipling's lines stick like burrs, but wattle is Australian. Perhaps someone will do the same with our tea-tree. Among lines completely native in their outline and tang are those by Ernest Currie that bring the Canterbury Plains before the senses, with their vital crop, and the mountains behind, and the north-west wind that

Whistles down from Porter's Pass, over the fields of wheat,  
And brings a breath of tussock grass into a Christchurch street.

New Zealanders must use, cherish, and pass on the magnificent body of English prose and verse, ancient, modern and evergrowing, that is their joint possession, but it will not entirely suffice for their needs. In the imported soil of language and tradition, but in new sunshine, wind and rain, we must grow our own prose and poetry. Some of the subjects and points of view of English literature must be alien to new societies. Nature herself imposes a bar to complete communion. The seasons furnish the most obvious example. New Zealanders and Australians are brought up on literature, American as well as English, that deals with March and April springs and winter Christmas. "Oh, to be in England now that April's there"; "... and take the winds of March with beauty"; "If you were April's lady and I were lord in May". These and countless other references have to be translated, however quickly and automatically, as they pass into the southern hemisphere mind. "Memory was given to man," it has been said, "that he

might have roses in December." December? Why, that's the month our summer holidays begin, and it's full of roses. "Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang", are not so numerous in a land where the native trees are all evergreen. In reading English literature we have to make an unending series of adjustments in season, landscape, and social habit. In writing we have to adapt our inherited instrument of language to our own life, our land and its ways of thought and speech. Consider the lovely sound of English place names; for example, "Evenlode" and "Windrush". The very sound of these names gives us pleasure. Words, however, are more than sounds; they have meaning and associations. It stands to reason that "Evenlode" and "Windrush" mean more to an Englishman steeped in the beauty of his countryside, than to a New Zealander, especially if he has never seen England. May we not, however, find music in our own names? When I was in my fifties I brought this idea into a poem called "Aldebaran". I wrote that as we went through life we New Zealanders were accompanied by two sets of words, English and Maori. I set down a string of English words—"Windrush", "hawthorn", "rosemary", "loose-strife", and so on, and then mixed them with Maori.

Meadowsweet, primrose, Hebrides;  
Kowhai, Sirius, Moana, Miro;  
Aldebaran, Wainui, Miro;  
Konini, konini, rosemary, riro.

My idea is that as the years pass, provided we do not butcher pronunciation unmercifully, Maori words will gradually creep into our minds and hearts and become an integral part of our inner life.

I wrote that poem in my fifties, so I had taken a long time to arrive at this idea. If I had been born a generation later, I might not have taken so long. Poetry has been defined as emotion recollected in tranquillity. Sometimes the experience lies more or less dormant in the mind for years. I wrote "The Riro-Riro" more than twenty years after I had heard the bird sing in the Katikati bush. The more immediate suggestion for my verses "Dead Timber" came from a stay on a New Zealand bush farm, where dead trees stood and lay all about the place, but I had been seeing such a landscape on and off all my life. When I first travelled from New Plymouth to Wellington, nearly fifty years ago, there was plenty of dead timber near the railway line, shells of the heavy bush through which General Chute's column marched in 1866. It

has long since given way to smoothly patterned dairying country. "Golden Wedding", a description of the celebration of a pioneering couple, I wrote in about my fiftieth year, but the memories I drew from went back to my childhood. On the other hand the ideas for my three short New Zealand plays, published in 1922, came to me fresh in my adult years. These were played in New Zealand and Australia, and one in Edinburgh. I was a proud man when the Sydney Repertory Theatre produced *For Love of Appin*, but somewhat dashed when I found that, without my permission, they had changed the scene from a New Zealand farmhouse to one in New South Wales.

One thing more about my liking for poetry may be added, because it illustrates as well as anything the changes I have gone through. When I was young I saw little or nothing in Walt Whitman. He seemed pretty ordinary, eccentric, and rather vulgar. I could not stomach his unconventionality. I have come to admire him greatly. Why? For one reason, because I have grown more thoroughly colonial. I recognize in him something akin to our own British colonial frontier spirit—an independence, a freedom, a worship of nature, different from the attitudes of Englishmen. Whitman is the essence of colonialism in literature. Poems like "President Lincoln's Funeral Hymn", ("When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloomed") and "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" speak with the accent of a new world, and New Zealand is a new world.

Meanwhile much was happening to literature in New Zealand. The process that had been going on in me had been working in others, and sometimes more quickly. They had keener susceptibilities, or were second or third generation New Zealanders, and for that reason farther removed from the Mother influence. To understand the development of our literature it is necessary to consider the age and setting of our society. This I suggested in an article reviewing the changes of fifty years that I wrote for the *New Zealand Listener* at the dawn of 1950. After pointing out the immense changes the world had gone through in those years and in the eighty years since the beginning of the Franco-German war, I drew some conclusions from the comparative youth of New Zealand. This is the youngest of the English-speaking Dominions. As a British colony, Australia had some fifty years start on us. Dutch South Africa dates to 1652, and French Canada is older. Talk of the youth of the United States is still common, though it is many years since Wilde wrote of it as the oldest American tradition. We are apt to forget that the Pilgrim Fathers

landed as far back as 1620, and that there was an earlier colony in Virginia. New Zealand has had a short infancy, childhood and adolescence. It was born, moreover, not before or early in the industrial revolution, but in the middle of it. Railways and steamers were running before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in 1840. The development of this colonial child was forced. We were not quite sixty years old when, on sending our first troops to South Africa, we began to think we might be a nation. In a period of less than fifty years from that time, we fought in history's two greatest wars, and with a strength and in a geographical range that our grandfathers would have thought fantastic. It was as if a youth of eighteen, looking forward with no misgivings to a conventional coming of age, was suddenly called upon to play a man's part in a long, complicated and tragic family crisis.

I suggest that the effect of this shortening of the formative period, and of this sequence of stern and tragic experiences on one so young, is worth study. Here, I am concerned with literature. American letters were cradled over a long period in a rapidly growing and buoyant society. That society lived expansively, worshipped romance, and hardly questioned the validity of optimism as a philosophy of life. Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow would be fuller and happier than today. Literature might find little to sup on in this toiling, shirt-sleeve, confident world, but its practitioners had space and time to learn their craft. Decade followed decade, writing was moulded, the public for it increased, and something unmistakably American in shape and colour and taste took form, and fed and swelled and branched through spacious years. It is a long way in time and in treatment from Washington Irving to Mark Twain, and from Mark Twain to Hemingway and Steinbeck. Romance established itself in leisurely fashion before realism came marching with set face and no colours flying, but realism owed something to romance; both were branches of the same tree.

Our own literature has not known anything comparable to the long-continued, confident, large-family life that American literature enjoyed in the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth. Before the first war ours was something like an infant crying in the night, crying in a back-room with no one heeding it. When a new stimulus and prospect of better sales came to our writers, the greater world to which they looked for models and often for markets was sophisticated, disillusioned, and bitter. There was no pleasant undergraduate period. If a New Zealander wrote another *Huckleberry Finn*, his main object would probably be

to depict Huck as the pitiful victim of a conscienceless capitalist economy, and the story might be drowned in a flood of propaganda.

In order to progress, New Zealand literature had to do two things. It had to move farther away from the dual world of which Katikati was an example, where one foot was in New Zealand, and the other so firmly in "Home". It had to see a tui as an Englishman sees a robin, and tea-tree as a Scot sees heather. This feeling had to be woven into the creation of character, into an intellectual fabric. The local must not be scorned just because it is local, or the small because it is small. Like writers in every land, the New Zealander draws inspiration from local landscape and its life. To love one's country but to give particular devotion to the place of one's birth or early associations, is a common condition. We shall follow Britain and America in the development of regional literature. If that literature is to be vital, however, interpretation must make a bridge between the small and perhaps remote scene, and humanity. We shall derive much of our best prose and verse from local attachments, for through our deep and passionate concentration on the particular we shall express the truth in general.

Secondly, local writers had to persuade New Zealanders to read and appreciate New Zealand books. Between 1920 and 1950 New Zealand literature advanced some distance along these roads. There was a rapid development in originality and breadth of interest. If we compare the poetry of the period with that of earlier times, we soon see that it has become more philosophical, more concerned with intellectual values, more critical of life. This comes out very clearly if you take the earlier anthologies—*New Zealand Verse*, *The New Zealand Treasury*, and *Kowhai Gold*, and then Allen Curnow's collection of verse written between the early nineteen-twenties and the middle nineteen-forties. The body of good poetry written in the twentieth century is much larger than the crop in the previous sixty years. Our poetry has been influenced by trends in Britain and America. In our prose the mark of Hemingway is plain. One of our leading poets, the late A. R. D. Fairburn, dealt with American influence in an article, one of the most valuable contributions to our criticism, that he wrote for *Art in New Zealand* in 1934. From the New Zealand point of view he regards Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* as the most important novel ever written. We understand Huck Finn, the true colonial, when we can only pretend to understand Tom Brown, the English public school boy. I partly agree with him. Certainly to me *Huckleberry Finn* is one of the greatest novels. Generally

speaking, New Zealanders now write more as men of the world than they used, and less as New Zealanders, though the New Zealand background is often plainly there. John Beaglehole's noble tribute to Johann Sebastian Bach is fit to rank with the greatest poems on music. In only one short passage does it indicate New Zealand. On the other hand, Eileen Duggan, whom I would place first among our poets, is most distinctly a New Zealander. Her success has this special interest, that in an era of revolt and experiment, she is a traditionalist. Her tradition is partly that of the Catholic faith. She achieves some of her finest effects by sheer simplicity and is able to indicate the general through the particular.

Post-war New Zealand poetry has widened the poet's technique and human experience, but, in my opinion, it shares the defects of contemporary English poetry, which to a considerable extent has been its teacher. Both master and pupil have become afraid and scornful of simple emotion, and have deified the intellect in involuted thought. They have discarded the old singing rhythms; who ever comes across an anapaestic measure now? That this verse is often a "fuzz of words" is an old reproach against Swinburne. It might be said of some of his successors that much of theirs is a *furze*. I find this "modern" poetry much less easy to recall than the old-fashioned sort. Maybe this is because I am old and memory does not feed easily on new pastures. If, however, the new verse is less easily memorized, I submit this is a distinct weakness. Poetry should be a companion capable of being called up at any moment. "The last thing desired by these minor poets," says Mr Ivor Brown (*Just Another Word*) in comment on what he describes as "the inevitable reaction against the old rhythms and the old terminology", "was to be recited or quoted or sung in the bath. Well, they have had their way. They aren't." Let us admit, he adds, that this self-denial is "rooted in a species of integrity". Yes, but it is fun to recite in the bath.

Also, and this is linked with the foregoing criticism, this poetry is not so quotable for occasions. I concede that this may be partly explainable by its newness in time, and that eventually the best of it may pass into current coinage. However, I doubt that this will be so. Poets are less concerned than they used to be with hitting off situations in language not only arresting but reasonably simple—indeed, arresting partly because it is simple. The tortuous and muscle-bound technique of today does not lend itself easily to quotation. At any rate I do not find it in my reading of contemporary journalism and letters. This also, I submit, is a pity. The quotation habit can easily become a vice, but judicious

use gives a flavour and a point to writing. The English poet of the post-Tennyson era most frequently quoted is Kipling, who reached his zenith half a century ago.

Another feature of much of the poetry of the twenties and after is that the poets seem positively to dislike popularity. Poetry is more a coterie affair than before. Poets used to write for a public; now many of them appear to write largely for other poets. Yet I salute the greater vitality and range of much of our newer poetry in New Zealand. In fiction, essay-writing, history, biography and criticism, there is a similar gain. Our writers concern themselves to a greater extent with the general life of the nation. We are more self-critical, and are better equipped for the job. The historian and biographer have access to a much larger mass of material, and scholarship is thereby nourished. Oliver Duff's *New Zealand Now* and M. H. Holcroft's philosophical essays are the product of history working on fine minds, and those minds are the children of that history.

Our literature, like that of other countries in these swaying years, has become charged with propaganda. The time is out of joint, and it is the artist's business to set it right. In some quarters the doctrine is preached that all art must be propaganda. This must be rejected by anyone who values the liberal, humane tradition of letters. I had an amusing experience of this obsession. A few years ago I wrote a short story about a mild-mannered clerk who was fond of poetry. Going to his office one morning under the influence of spring and Keats, he told his employer just what he thought of him, and was sacked on the spot. The story ended with the clerk breaking the news to his wife and making a joke about it that bewildered her. A Leftist critic said of the story that he was less interested in it than in what happened to the clerk after he had been thrown out of employment by our economic system. Well, well! Mine was a very modest little effort, but if this is to be the criterion of literature, quite a number of the classics will have to be rewritten. I will say one thing; my hero clerk would not have whined about his lot.

We are not strong yet in wit or humour. Irony is suspect. Our public speeches are apt to be dreary processions of platitude. This lack of native humour is a little curious. New Zealand is a magnificently endowed country and prides itself on its high standard of health, education, and general living. Why has it produced so little literature that is joyous, or even happy? Oliver Duff notes that the Cockney is readier with jokes. We are a frontier country, but we have nothing to put beside the frontier humour of

America. Perhaps the explanation lies partly in that compression of our youth to which I have referred. So many of our writers seem convinced that this is always a vale of tears. Browning has a poem about a dying man who refused to regard life as a vale of tears, but apparently what Browning said is not evidence these days.

How has the author fared in this improvement? He has benefited by it, but I have yet to meet or hear of one who has made anything like a fortune on the local market. There is a good deal of misconception and some cant about the rewards of writing. It is beneath the dignity of letters to work for money; devotion to literature should be its own reward. It is true that genius may break out under compulsion to express itself, whether it is paid or not. It is also true, however, that many geniuses have written for money, and that some of them might not have written if there had not been the urge to make a living. Sometimes money is the spur that genius or high talent needs to make it take its coat off. Briefless barristers and hard-up doctors—Conan Doyle is an example—have written in their spare time and thereby found fame and fortune. But the rewards? The public is dazzled by the success of popular books. They do not realize that numbers of well-written books have only a small sale and bring their authors little. It is a revelation to find from the returns of Civil List Pensions in England how many distinguished writers have been forced to accept this aid from the State. The reason is that there is no such thing as a profession of literature, in the sense that law, medicine, engineering and architecture are professions. The demand for the services of writers is unpredictable. Writing is not a profession; it is an adventure—often the best fun in the world—a gamble.

When I had been writing books for twenty years, I made a calculation. Beginning with my collaboration in *Maori and Pakeha*, a history of New Zealand, in 1921, I had written ten books, some of which had had a fair success. Some were published in England and others in New Zealand. Four of them were very small and two of these four were verse. I found that all the money I had received from my books, straight-out payments and royalties, did not equal my salary as a journalist for one year. If all this surprises you, consider the average novel in England. It does not sell more than two thousand copies, or did not before the second war. If the author is paid a shilling a copy royalty, he receives a hundred pounds. It may have taken him a year or more to write the book. The most money I have ever received for a book was

for *The City of the Strait*, the Centennial history of Wellington, which was a commissioned job. Even in England only a small proportion of writers give their whole time to writing. They spend writing days in salaried employment. A woman writer may have a husband to support her. There are so many writers in the English Civil Service that they have formed a Civil Service Authors' Club.

It should be plain that if the way of the writer is hard in England, it is much harder in our small community. Some English and New Zealand critics of our culture have not given sufficient consideration to conditions here and in the Homeland. Literature does not flourish so happily in a nation of fifty millions, rich in the tradition of learning, that Englishmen can afford to be entirely superior towards its state in this young country of about two millions. It has been complained that we have no good literary periodicals. At the time of writing we have three or four. We could do with more, and a general rise in the standard of reviewing, but it may be pointed out that the mortality among such journals in England is notoriously high, and I have never read that any of those who carry on claim a very large circulation. I should say that proportionately the number of people in New Zealand who care about literature is at least as high as it is in England. With our wider diffusion of education, it may be higher. "New Zealanders are indeed the world's best readers," wrote Michael Joseph, an English publisher, in 1949.

Obviously, however, the smallness of our population is a serious handicap to the native writer. He may capture the many times larger market overseas, but in trying to do so he may be tempted to be false to his art. The English publisher may prefer an English setting to a New Zealand one, but the New Zealand writer cannot know the English scene as well as he knows his own. One reason why New Zealand needs more population, is to nourish the cultural life generally. We should have more writers, more artists, more musicians and more people to maintain them.

Meanwhile the State has come to the aid of literature in three ways. Shortly after the first Labour Government took office in 1935, it introduced pensions for writers of standing whom circumstances had not treated well. In the year of the Dominion's Centennial, the Government published a series of national surveys which set a high standard of format as well of content, and payment to the author. Later the same Government established an annual grant for the publication or writing of books that were not likely to be published on the ordinary commercial basis, and set up a committee to advise upon allocation.

## *Chapter Twelve*

### **“HOME” AND THE ENGLISH**

*First Sight of England—How a Tribute Book was Written—The English and Their Dominions—Ignorance and Lack of Interest—Misjudgments by Intellectuals—Misfits and Successes Overseas—England and America: What is History?—English Attitude to America Repeated in the Commonwealth—Scots and Irish in Our Society—Repercussions of the Irish Question—Irish Play-boy and the Real Irish.*

**B**EFORE I GO ON TO MY YEARS in Auckland journalism after the first world war, including the depression, I want to say something about what to me was a very important interlude. In 1926 a dream came true; I visited England. I was able to do so through the generosity of Sir Cecil Leys and his co-directors of the *Auckland Star*, who gave me leave on full pay and a handsome cheque for expenses. I wrote a book about my visit, and how it came to be written is worth telling as an example of the way opportunity may come to a man. If it had been a completely overcast day when we went up the English Channel in the *Tainui*, perhaps my book would not have been written.

It was a day of showers and bright sunshine, and now and then, in bursts of great glory, I got my first sight of England. My best friend on board was an Australian. He was a wonderful chap—Presbyterian minister, schoolmaster, philosopher and athlete; a man as kind and wise as he was learned, who always had humour and commonsense at call. This Australian was making his third visit to England. His first had been when he went to Oxford; his second was during his war service. He was as staunch an Australian as ever smelled wattle, but his third sight of England, as we slid past the sunlit, patterned loveliness of its shore, moved him as much as my first moved me. “He and I looked at each other and, stricken with embarrassment, groped for words.” So I wrote in *Home*. “I told him a story about a gushing young lady who, on meeting a famous literary man for the first time, asked him if he did not think Shakespeare was clever. ‘No, not clever,’ he replied, ‘but distinctly painstaking.’ When I had finished and looked at the Australian’s face, I felt ashamed. ‘At such moments,’

I explained hastily, 'some people take refuge in trivialities.' 'Some people take refuge in tears,' he said, and indeed he had difficulty in keeping them back. So had I."

Shortly after I reached London, I called on J. C. Squire (later Sir John Squire), editor of the *London Mercury*, because he had printed some articles from me on letters in New Zealand. Squire was poet, critic and editor, one of the powers in the literary world, a noted encourager of talent. He was, and I have no doubt still is, a lover of cricket. He ran a team called the "Invalids", composed of writers and artists, who played in those one-day country matches that are such a delightful feature of the game in England. Squire had an office in the Strand, about the size of a bathroom. We adjourned to a nearby bar, and over our drinks I told him what had happened coming up the Channel, how we saw the Scilly Islands, and then Land's End was obscured by rain, and later the sun came out as we passed the Lizard, and so on. As I described how the rain came down on the scene, and went, and the sun shone, he quoted some lines from the *Hound of Heaven*: "I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds." A little later I had a postcard from Squire. "Can you see me? I have an idea." When I saw him, he told me he had been talking to Mr Robert Longman, of Longmans, Green & Co. He had mentioned what I had said about my first sight of England, and suggested there might be a book in it. Mr Longman was interested. So was I! It was agreed I should write an opening chapter or two before I left England and show the script to Squire. I had it ready when I went to spend a week-end with Squire at his place in Surrey, after a match the Invalids were playing at Aldermaston. One of the Bax's was in the side, and Reginald Berkeley, author of *French Leave* and *The Lady with the Lamp*, who, coming from Fiji, had studied law at Auckland University College. Squire read my stuff while I played cards with his boys in the same room. I fear my mind was not on the game.

That good friend, to whom and to his wife, I express my thanks and my wife's for encouragement and hospitality, gave Mr Longman his opinion, and the upshot was that on the eve of sailing from England I called on Mr Longman at the firm's office in historic Paternoster Row, beside St Paul's. As a child in New Zealand I had seen the words "Paternoster Row" and "Amen Corner" on school-books, and thought, "What funny names!" Now I was at that ancient seat of the publishing business, in a quiet corner since destroyed by the blitz, seeing the oldest house in England about putting out a book. On the Atlantic I got a radiogram accepting

the book, and I went on writing it in the *Niagara*, coming down from Vancouver. It was fortunate for me that Squire wrote an introduction, and Claire Leighton did the wood-cuts. It was one of Claire's early commissions, and since then she has become recognized as one of the world's leading wood-cut artists.

I called the book *Home* because its whole basis was the visit of a New Zealander to what he had always regarded—and still regards—as "Home". Britain, or what they used to call the British Isles (and I hope deeply they will some day bear the name again) is our original home—politically, socially, intellectually and spiritually—and the word "Home" embraces all the geographical origins of this heritage. If a New Zealander says, "I'm going to England", he leaves out Wales, Scotland and Ireland, though he may intend to visit all three. If he says, "I'm going Home", he puts a comprehensive visa on his passport. We grow into a nation, but ties with the Homeland remain. They are material and cultural, and range from Shakespeare and the Bible to trade, social habits, political institutions and *habeas corpus*. I know there are objectors to the word. By putting it on my book I have suffered in reputation with some New Zealanders. I cheerfully concede "Home" may be used in the wrong way—if it indicates a spirit of subservience; if it means we are English rather than New Zealand; if it is written with a small "h". I have good support. There was my Australian friend on board. A very famous Australian, Sir Donald Bradman, has written: "No Australian can ever taste the true fulfilment of cricket's enchantment without experiencing a season 'at Home'."

The book has meant a great deal to me. It ultimately went into Longman's small select Swan Library, where I found myself in wonderful company—among them Richard Jefferies, William Morris, G. M. Trevelyan, Dean Inge, Thornton Wilder, and my beloved Irish pair, Edith Somerville and Martin Ross. The book brought me letters from people in various parts of the world, and was the foundation of friendships. A retired major of the Indian Army wrote me from Surrey. Some years afterwards he walked into my office in Auckland quite unexpectedly, and told me it was largely as a result of reading my book that he had come to see New Zealand. However, the appreciation of *Home* that pleases me most is something I heard of only in recent years. A New Zealand prisoner of war reported that "the book all the men in the camp were after, was *Home* by Alan Mulgan." If a man writes a book that cheers the lot of prisoners of war, he may legitimately say he has not written entirely in vain.

I did not see nearly as much of England and the British Isles as I wished, but enough to fill my heart and fortify my mind. I saw England's beauty and strength. I was there all through the General Strike, that enormous folly touched with good humour. I returned more convinced than ever that the British, and particularly the English, for after all they *are* the predominant partner, were the greatest people on earth, greatest in combined achievement and character. If, however, I am told that I love England uncritically, that I am infatuated with her, which has been suggested, I say, "Nonsense! You cannot read *Home* carefully and intelligently and not see that I find faults in England and the English." I have written so many articles containing criticism of England, that if I were to be given a pound for every one I could take another trip "Home", and a very comfortable one, despite the increased cost of travel. However, it is difficult or impossible to persuade some people that you can love or admire and yet be critical. If they dislike something or other about a person or a nation, they dislike everything. People have said to me: "You don't like Shaw." This was not a fair way to put it. I disliked some things about Bernard Shaw very much, especially his methods of controversy, but I admired him enormously in other respects and was certain he was a great man. There are things in Kipling that irritate me, but I should hate to be without him, and I say deliberately that the set made against Kipling for political reasons is one of the most discreditable chapters in the history of English criticism. When you are moved by Milton's poetry, that does not mean that you accept Milton's theology.

More than thirty years after I wrote *Home*, I wish to make some further comments on England and the English, which, for what they are worth, are the product of many years of personal contact, reading and reflection. I have tried to study the English from every angle. On my shelves is a fairly good collection of analyses, from Santayana's essay and André Maurois's *Colonel Bramble*, to Professor Macneile Dixon's *The Englishman*, Dorothy Sayers's *The Mysterious English*, all the volumes in the English Heritage series, and Sir Ernest Barker's long-evening symposium, *The Character of England*. I do not propose to compete with these distinguished authorities. I shall try to add a little from another angle, the point of view of a small and very distant Dominion, to depict some facets of the Englishman in his position as a member of the central society in the Empire-Commonwealth.

One of the surprises the colonial has encountered in England

has been the apparent lack of interest in the Empire and especially in the Dominions. This applies more to the years before 1914 and 1939, so I shall begin in the past tense. Arriving full of Imperial pride, the colonial might find little to match his enthusiasm. He was almost bound to meet Englishmen and women who had only the vaguest idea where his country was and how people lived there. Possibly they were surprised that he did not wear riding breeches and a sombrero and carry a stockwhip, or that he spoke English and had quite passable manners. In English fiction of the nineties and early nineteen hundreds there was a thin thread of a convention about the colonial visitor. He was bearded, blunt and tough. Our colonial found England very hospitable, as it always has been, but really not interested in him or his kind.

If he dug for reasons, he might come to the generalization (like all generalizations, to be applied with caution) that to the English, and especially the governing classes, the Empire meant primarily and mostly, India and the Crown Colonies, the Navy and the Army, and the Colonial Office Service. This restricted interest was strong in the governing classes, because they supplied the officers and officials for these services. It was natural that Englishmen should give a good deal of attention to Europe. The shortest distance from England to Europe was only a few miles, and what was at the other side of those narrow seas had always been a matter of vital interest to English governments. The inhabitants of England had fought continentals over a period of two thousand years. The nearest large self-governing Colony or Dominion lay at the other side of an ocean, and had long since ceased to be a military problem. The Dominions were distant, shadowy territories where men rode round sheep-farms, grew wheat, cut down timber and hunted wild animals, and people lived in lonely homesteads or in tents or shacks. Moreover, if a young Englishman went into one of the Crown services, he was based in England, and settled at home when he retired. If he went to a Dominion he usually stayed there. There was little knowledge of or interest in these oversea countries—the breaking-in of the wilderness, the growth of cities (Sydney topped the million mark years ago), the adaptation of English institutions to a new environment, and the development of new nationalism and culture.

A good many years ago a New Zealand school inspector who worked for a while in England was not invited to speak to the children about New Zealand, in any of the schools he visited. At about the same time I was told that the London County Council's collection of oversea pictures for schools did not include one

Dominion subject. In the years after the second war a New Zealander did temporary duty in an English school in company with women from South Africa, Canada and Australia. The head-mistress took no interest in the diversity of these assistants. To her they were just colonials. The head of a State dental service in a foreign country was sent to England to study the English scheme. Everywhere she went she was told that this was the first of its kind. She heard nothing of New Zealand, and later she took some convincing that New Zealand had established a dental service in schools many years earlier. At the same time the New Zealand teacher mentioned, on being shown round the House of Commons by a Labour M.P., happened to speak of the rationing of food in her country. "You don't mean to tell me," said the M.P., "that you have rationing in New Zealand!" The New Zealander was justifiably annoyed. The New Zealand fabric had gone through the war unscarred, and New Zealanders had not suffered from food shortage to anything like the extent of Britain, but New Zealand had introduced food and other rationing during the war, had maintained food rationing for some years so that as much food as possible could go to Britain, and was still applying it to butter. An English Member of Parliament might reasonably have been expected to know this.

It was sad to find that when the second "Miss New Zealand" returned from Britain in 1949, she reported a state of ignorance about New Zealand similar to that noticed by earlier generations of colonials. The old idea that we were black still lingered. Even the B.B.C. in the late nineteen-forties put on a New Zealand Day programme in a naïve spirit of discovery, as much as to say: "By jove, here's a country away down in the South Pacific. Let's go and have a look at it!" The first requisite for really good relations between England and the Dominions is that Englishmen should regard colonials as adults equal to themselves, and not as interesting children. This unimaginative attitude is not confined to any one party.

In the intellectual world there has been a tendency to despise colonial society as raw and crude. This has been complicated by a Leftist disposition to be hostile or indifferent to anything in the Empire-Commonwealth because that organization is supposed to be the creation and special preserve of the Tories. Anything fostered by the Tories must be suspect. This type of critic often lives in an academic cell sealed off from hard experience, and confuses theory and the more hothouse kind of art with life. His misconception of oversea conditions is confirmed when he meets

a colonial who declares that his own country is an intellectual desert. A commentary on this judgment was made by a distinguished Englishwoman who appreciated what she found in New Zealand. The complaint, she said, was made by two types: those who had never been to New Zealand, and those who had never been anywhere else.

A large class in the Old Country has grown up in conditions of comfort, including service and deference, and some members do not transplant well. They miss these lubricants of life, and also the circle of persons of similar tastes, the sort of set that grows naturally round a university college, or a country rectory. Consequently they deplore the lack of refinement and culture. They do not realize how unreasonable it is to expect overseas a replica of England. It is not only that society is newer and smaller, and still a good deal occupied with pioneering, but that they themselves are making a wider set of contacts, enlarging their former experience.

When the New Zealand visitor I have cited travelled to England, she took part in a shipboard discussion to ease tension between disgruntled English people returning, and New Zealanders. The general conclusion seems to have been that discontent resolved itself mainly into homesickness and lack of housing. One of the returning group was a Church of England clergyman who had been unhappy in his New Zealand country parish. I can imagine why, but his district was far from being the worst we could offer. In the discussion he argued that New Zealand did not offer what a cultured man of God should expect. This particular New Zealander retorted that any country in any state was a fit place for any clergyman; that immigrants should be concerned with giving to their new country as well as receiving from it; and that she was descended from two immigrants of his own cloth. When the complainant said he had been unable to buy a Greek Testament in New Zealand, the reply was: "I've got one in my cabin, and I'll lend it to you. I bought it in X . . ." (a New Zealand provincial town). I should say it was a wiser man who disembarked at Southampton.

The record of the Christian Church in New Zealand is rich in cheerful bearing of hardship, in devotion and heroism. It has its martyrs, European and Maori. I have read the autobiography of a Church of England clergyman (*Southern Cross and Evening Star*, by Canon John Russell Wilford) who as a young man was appointed to a New Zealand country parish in 1904, in our middle period. He had come from an English rectory, and his wife from

a doctor's comfortable home in London. In their first New Zealand vicarage there was no water laid on, the scullery flooded after rain, the chimneys belched smoke into the rooms, and every night at bedtime the household propped the doors open so that they could get out quickly if there was an earthquake. Before the vicar went off on his daily round he carried the day's water-supply uphill from a trickle. A plague of rats called for wholesale poisoning, but the resultant smell was so bad that when the bishop came they insisted on having meals out of doors and refused to let him stay with them. "As my wife managed the bishop, so she managed me," wrote Mr Wilford at the time. "We hadn't," she told me, "come those thousands of wearisome miles just to solve domestic problems. There were souls to tend." Let him get out on his job and leave her to her troubles. That was the spirit in which these two laboured for many years in New Zealand country and town. Far greater were the hardships confronting the early missionaries. Some had to endure the nearness of cannibalistic orgies, and went in peril of their lives. As a worker in the Dominions, however, the English Anglican priest may be affected by new conditions. In England he enjoys the privilege and prestige of an Established Church; overseas, he does not. There his church is less secure and poorer, and if he is set in his ways he may find the change rather disconcerting.

The university don is exposed to another danger, that of regarding the world as a Fellows' Garden. Oversea conditions shove him into closer relationship with the mass of extra-university society—clerks, farmers, car-drivers and navvies. If he is unimaginative he will deplore the general lack of culture and sigh for his English life. It does not occur to him that he would find the same lack, and perhaps more of it proportionately, if he elbowed his way into the toiling masses of Britain. Comparison between a selected community and a general community should be made cautiously.

There has been some resemblance between the attitude of the educated Englishman to the United States and his attitude to the Dominions. It is now a commonplace that the British at home and overseas have been sadly and dangerously ignorant of American history. This is not altogether their fault, and there is no doubt that ignorance on the other side is widespread and formidable. Which body of ignorance is the greater, is a matter of opinion. Professor G. M. Trevelyan considers the Americans know more about British history than the British do about American, and there is no weightier authority. From experience gained in the only large-scale foreign impact their country has known, New

Zealanders can contribute to the study of this American ignorance. At a time when, if Britain had had to stand alone against Japan, these islands would have been wide open to attack, tens of thousands of Americans came here as welcome guests and protectors. New Zealand was a base for their operations in the Pacific Islands. I saw the great fleet of transports carrying men who had trained in New Zealand, and escorting warships, leave for the Guadalcanal landing. Nothing could have done so much as the presence of these Americans in our midst to acquaint us with American ways of life, and make us realize the importance of the United States in Pacific and world strategy. America was no longer a geographical expression, but a vital entity. The American became far more than a character in a book or on the screen. He was walking about our streets, and coming into our homes. The metaphor of forged links is hardly adequate. Seed was sown.

One of the things we discovered was that Americans had the queerest ideas of the British Empire. Shortly before the war an American correspondent, who was a university graduate, asked on arrival in New Zealand, when we were going to throw off the British yoke. Whatever the answer was, laughter or resentment, it should have been the beginning of his education in the nature of the Empire-Commonwealth. New Zealanders had no thought of throwing off the British yoke, for the simple reason that there was not any such thing. We managed our own affairs, we had thrown our strength into war without any compulsion whatever on the part of Britain, and were about to do so again. When the American "invasion" came, we found this "yoke" and "exploitation" idea was commonly held. It was believed we paid our taxes to King George, which was entirely incorrect. Really, it was the other way about, in that Britain, as always, was shouldering by far the greater burden of Empire defence. Like the American in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, who was quite sure, despite Martin's correction, that the Queen lived in the Tower of London, some of our visitors refused to be convinced. A senior civil servant, whose job lay among statistics, entertained two American officers for an evening. One was an actuary, the other an industrial engineer. They said Britain was exploiting New Zealand. Their host said the reverse was the truth, and gave them facts. It was quite an amicable argument, but the Americans went away unshaken.

One may put this ignorance down mainly to American memories of their colonial history, which have stereotyped a false general conception of British colonial rule. Our Australian brothers must have observed the same thing. It is reported that

an American sergeant flying in Australia looked down on the country-side and exclaimed: "God, what a country this would be if only the British would get out!" There is some fault, however, on the side of the British. Have they done enough to explain the difference between a colony and a dominion, and the movement towards self-government in the colonies proper? Professor Allan Nevins, the eminent American historian, who visited New Zealand during the second war and showed himself a man of real understanding, suggested that a factor in American ignorance was the uniformly red colouring of the Empire on the map. Americans saw the Empire-Commonwealth splashed in one shade of red all over the world, and concluded it was all in a state of vassalage and exploitation. However, time and alliance should dispel a good deal of this misunderstanding. Many American servicemen took New Zealand and Australian wives back with them, and these women may be disposed to assure their new communities that these countries are not quite in the same position as the American colonies were in 1775.

A basic difficulty in spreading truth from one country to another is that there is so much history to learn. An Englishman or an American may find himself fully occupied with the story of his own land. Nor have historians and publishers been as helpful as they might. My own experience suggests that Britons would be less ignorant of American history if they had been provided with short well-written and generally attractive records of the American story. It was not till I was over sixty that I found what I lacked in this respect. *America: the Story of a Free People*, by Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager covers admirably the whole development of the United States from the very beginning to Pearl Harbour, four hundred and fifty pages, yet is compact enough to go into the pocket. It is one of the books I never lend. Probably it would not have been written but for the war.

The publisher might argue, however, that the sluggishness of the public's curiosity was partly responsible for the lack of handy, attractive histories. The British, and this includes the oversea communities, were not really interested in America. They were inclined to judge it hastily and superficially by its brawling and corrupt politics, its sprawling vulgarities, its crudeness and bombast. Dickens's *Eden* was better known than Massachusetts's Cambridge. American history did not conform to traditional pattern. "We are continually told," says Professor Brogan in a *Spectator* review of a history of the American people published in 1949, "that American history is dull, that it lacks the romance

of, say, French history—bloody revolutions, kings' mistresses, splendid and disastrous wars, Versailles and the Louvre and all that. It is, I think, a defect in historical imagination to suppose that vivid human romantic history can take only one form." This is the mistake we have made about the United States. It is the mistake the people at Home have made about the colony-dominions. And let us not forget it was the mistake we New Zealanders made until recently about our own country. History was some other country's story, and it centred largely round kings and courts and parliaments, and wars conducted with pomp and circumstance.

The intellectuals of Britain set the tone towards America not only for their countrymen but for the colonies. They were over-inclined to judge the States by their own standard of culture. Matthew Arnold found American life "uninteresting". Lincoln, who wrote the Gettysburg Speech and the Second Inaugural, lacked "distinction". It has been said that the worst of great thinkers is that they so often think wrong. It was unreasonable to expect to find in America the mental cultivation of Europe. Americans were busy cultivating other things. They were building a great nation by taming a great land. The romance, the deep human interest, the enormous significance of this drama, this history with a difference, are only now beginning to be seen at their true worth by British communities.

Similarly, Englishmen have failed to see the appeal in the stories of those settlements by their own people which did not end in a Yorktown. On a smaller scale and with less diversity, it is the same kind of tale as America's—pioneering with body and mind, carving out a new society, improvising, planning, finding out what was on the other side of the hill, ploughing and sowing again and again until there was harvested, with the wheat of bread, the flower of a new love, the spirit of a nation. "Australia," says Mr Donald McCullough, question-master of the B.B.C. Brains Trust, "may easily turn out to be the greatest achievement of this country." "Cricket, yes," I can imagine an Englishman saying, "but what else?" The Englishman is more surprised than he should be when from those far-off lands there come men with a strange physical and mental bearing, fond of the Mother country but challenging some of her ways, stalwart and independent, standing firm on their own feet and looking clearly out of their own eyes.

In a poem written near the end of the century, "A Colonist in His Garden", William Pember Reeves put the colonial case well. Reeves was born in New Zealand only seventeen years after

its foundation, and in Canterbury less than seven years after the arrival of the "Pilgrims", but that did not prevent him from being heir to the culture of the ages. When he went to England after making his mark as a radical statesman, he was welcomed by the Fabians, held his own easily in high intellectual circles, and was Director of the London School of Economics. The colonist in his verses is one of that considerable band of cultivated Englishmen who enriched our private and public life in the early days. A friend in England writes to him to come back. Let him not say he can be contented in those lonely, empty lands "where men talk but of gold and sheep and think of sheep and gold".

A land without a past; a race  
Set in the rut of commonplace;  
Where Demos overfed  
Allows no gulf, respects no height;  
And grace and colour, music, light,  
From sturdy scorn are fled.

The colonist so addressed might ask what Mr Podsnap and his associates talked of but sheep and gold or their equivalents. What he does say is that England has gone, leaving him with happy memories: he is rooted "firm and fast" in the new land.

No art? Who serve an art more great  
Than we, rough architects of State  
With the old earth at strife?  
No colour? On the silent waste  
In pigments not to be effaced,  
We paint the hues of life.

"A land without a past"? The empty plains that he first saw forty years before are now warm with harvest.

This idea of a land without a past is a recurring theme. Philip Carrington, who was born in England and educated and ordained in New Zealand, and is now Archbishop of Quebec, made use of it in the first lines of his poem "Rangiora". As he rode by the Canterbury town of Rangiora, and remembered the history-steeped countryside of England,

The land has no antiquity  
(Said the little voice in my head)  
After all it has no history. . . .  
(No history, it said)

But what is history, he asked himself, and found the answer in the coming of the Maori and then the European, to Rangiora. I myself was constrained to preface my "Golden Wedding",

perhaps somewhat unjustly, with: " 'Of course, what you miss in a country like this, is history!'—Any tourist."

Though the first centuries are very shadowy, New Zealand has a long past. The country was rich in story and legend before the white man came. The Maori linked these islands to a homeland in the tropical Pacific. The white man linked it to its antipodes in the North Sea. The Maori's tenure of New Zealand is far longer than the European's. Christianity came to the country in 1814 and British government in 1840. It is the opinion of some that New Zealanders in general are still aware of the loss of their European past and do not feel they have made a past for themselves in their new land. In a fine poem called "*The Forerunners*", Charles Brasch, a contemporary writer, has expressed the idea that the Maori occupation was warmer and more understanding than ours, and

Behind our quickness, our shallow occupation of the easier  
Landscape, their unprotesting memory  
Mildly hovers, surrounding us with perspective,  
Offering soil for our rootless behaviour.

In other words, the European's way to true possession is through the Maori. I am sure Mr Brasch does not wish us to take him with complete literalness. After all that has happened, it is impossible that the European should have no roots here. His love for the country is beyond question. We see this in his strong homing instinct. However, it is necessary not to forget that the original New Zealander is with us in numbers; that he is increasing faster than the white man; that there has been a considerable mingling of the races; and that his mental processes are different from the European's.

Looking over the history of this country with "no history", we find that the British Army has left its record here in graves stretching from North Auckland to Wellington. The New Zealand Army has fought on South African kopjes, on the slopes of the Dardanelles, before Amiens in France, and in the shadow of Mt Olympus. It has ridden its horses in the Jordan Valley; raced over Greek and Roman dust on Mediterranean shores in lorries tended as lovingly as were those horses; battered at Cassino; and driven triumphantly into Trieste. In these adventures the Maori has been the white man's comrade.

The major story, however, is one of peace. It is the landing of pioneers to face sometimes a comprehensive question mark; the smoothing of the land, and the building of homes, towns and

cities; the making of laws to meet new conditions. It is John Logan Campbell walking across the Auckland isthmus before the foundation of the city, building a house on the new site, and living to see a hundred thousand people appreciate his gift of Auckland's noblest park. It is the first bullock-waggon, loaded with family and goods, to enter the Mackenzie country, and the memorial church at Cave to all those adventurers, men as well as masters, with a bowl from the farthest Hebrides serving as a font basin. It is Gabriel Read digging out gold from the soil with a butcher's knife, and so starting a rush that transformed Otago; Julius Vogel staggering the colony with his millions to build roads and railways; "Ready Money" Robinson getting together the 84,000 acres of his Cheviot Hills estate, and John McKenzie, Minister of Lands, buying it under challenge and cutting it up for settlement. It is the missionary, Samuel Marsden, new to the country, spending a night with Maoris who had killed and eaten the company of the ship *Boyd*; and nearly fifty years later the young Maori warrior who, during an attack on a British position, died in the arms of an ensign of the 65th Regiment, whispering with his last breath, "Forgive us our trespasses."

It is Richard Seddon forcing his darling Old Age Pension Bill through the House in a committee sitting of nearly ninety hours. It is two Scandinavian immigrants landing at Napier without any money, and walking to their section in the Forty-mile Bush, the woman carrying a baby and the man blankets and tools. It is Truby King saving babies not only for New Zealand but for the world, and Katherine Mansfield writing a story for her school magazine. It is Ernest Rutherford being told of his scholarship to Nelson College as he dug potatoes, and David Low drawing his first published cartoon at the age of eleven—and getting half-a-crown for it.

The English lack curiosity. This may be part of their ingrained habit of seclusion and segregation. They have a name for not speaking to strangers in trains (I must say I found them quite companionable there), and hiding themselves behind high hedges. Even after the mixing round in the second war, this incident was reported from a London suburb. A household notified a loss by a notice on his gate: "Lost a pair of gloves. Apply within." A day or two later the local policeman called to see if the gloves had been found, and to point out to the householder a notice on the gate next door: "Found, a pair of gloves. Apply within." I must say that up to a point I am with the English. I like rather more

privacy than is allowed a gold-fish. However, it is the lack of intellectual curiosity with which I am concerned. It is a commonplace that the English are the strangest of mixtures. They became the world's greatest traders, and at the same time produced a magnificent body of imaginative literature. If there had been no powerful inquiring minds among them, there would have been no Newton, no Locke, no Faraday, no Darwin, no Lister. Yet it is notorious that as a people they are mentally lazy.

Part of this laziness is a lack of curiosity about what other people have done and are doing. Again we have a contradiction. The nation that is so incurious in its mental habits was curious enough to explore the seven seas, and energetic enough in its curiosity to found the widest empire in history. It has been said the English established this empire in a fit of absence of mind. It is perhaps more true to say they managed it in a prolonged state of indifference. This is one respect in which the Englishman differs basically from the American. The Englishman does not particularly want to know what goes on elsewhere or in other peoples' heads. The American does. He is avid for information. He and his wife will flock to lectures on any subject from the Early Church in Abyssinia to the formation of the coral islands. The Englishman stays at home and smokes his pipe. It follows that as a class the Americans are easier company. They want to know all about a stranger, and it is agreeable to talk about oneself. Their hospitality is more spontaneous. For these reasons some New Zealanders get on better with Americans than with English people.

I have specifically written "English" and "Englishmen". The Scot is different. He uses and respects intellect. His bent towards inquiry is much stronger. Sturdily independent in himself, he is at the same time more approachable and more gregarious than the Englishman, because he is more democratic. To realize the truth of this, one has only to think of Gilbert's verses on the two Englishmen who found themselves on a desert island, but could not associate because they had not been introduced. If the characters were Scots, the satire would have no point at all. Before a week was out two marooned Scots would be forming a Burns Club. This absence of social nonsense accounts largely for the Scot's popularity in New Zealand, though most New Zealanders are English in origin. He fits in well with our social democracy. In the wars the New Zealand soldier was particularly happy with Scottish regiments. However, before I leave the English, let me say again, that I hold them to be the greatest of peoples. They make me mad and sad as well as glad, but pride

in them is stronger than the madness or the sadness, and I love them.

The Irish give us the imagination and dash they have infused into other communities. We get on well with them, so long as they do not press their imported differences too far. Conflicts that have torn Ireland have intruded into our public life. They have also shaped colonial policy. Ireland's grievances have sharpened oversea criticism of England—sometimes to the point of injustice—and helped to make colonials more eager for self-government. Unless we except the policy that lost her the American colonies, England's old record in Ireland is the most stupid thing in her history. I am far from suggesting that the fault has been all on one side. Remembering, however, that the Irish Nationalist Party used to send out delegations to explain their case to the colonies, I wish the Conservatives had had the imagination to dispatch agents to find out what colonials thought about the Irish question.

My own education in this problem I include in my development as a New Zealander. In my boyhood I learned little or nothing of Irish history. My mother's people, themselves Irish, thought of the Irish roughly in terms of two classes: the ascendancy party, linked to England, and the play-boy, the funny Irishman, the stage Irishman, the chap who carried a shillelagh, stuck his pipe in the band of his hat and said "Begorra!", a word so I learn from an authoritative source, no Irishman uses. The stage Irishman! Now that the old melodramas are played no more—at any rate in New Zealand—you don't see much of him. He was a pathetic figure. If I saw him today, I should want to cry rather than laugh. When I was a boy a London Gaiety star, E. J. Lonna, made hits with Irish comic songs—"Enniscorthy", "Ballyhooly", and "Killaloe". It has a special significance for me, that song about a man who "happened to be born at the time they cut the corn, quite contagious to the town of Killaloe". He was taught by a Frenchman, and the Frenchman said his mother was a "mère", and "he struck me when I said it wasn't true". That was Killaloe, play-boy stuff and nothing more. Years later, after I had learned a good deal about Ireland, I came upon a reference to Killaloe in a book by that distinguished Nationalist, Stephen Gwynn. For the best beauty in the Shannon Valley, he says, you must go to Killaloe, and there is the cathedral—in Protestant hands—"with noble stonework of Irish craftsmen from the twelfth century". Beside it "is a little old church of that early Celtic type with high-pitched stone roof, and in that church undoubtedly Brian Boru attended his devotion. For here at Killaloe

was the abode of the greatest of all the Gaelic kings of Ireland."

From the comic Killaloe, of which we sang with such gusto in the nineties, to this ancient cathedral and church, and Brian Boru; the contrast symbolizes much. Sinn Fein drew strength from this persistent conception of the Irish as comedians. It is said Michael Collins warned his followers not to be funny.

One Sunday afternoon in the first war I stopped on the Auckland waterfront to listen to a speaker on a box addressing a knot of people. "They tell us," he said in a tone touched with irony, "that war is being fought to protect the small nations. What about Ireland?" I turned away sadly. What the speaker said made no difference to my convictions about the war, but it hurt to be reminded that there was this vulnerable point in Britain's record. The man on the box that afternoon was Michael Joseph Savage, not yet in Parliament, but destined to be New Zealand's first Labour Prime Minister, and to take New Zealand, without hesitation, into the second world war. "Where Britain goes we go. Where Britain stands, we stand." His words became historic.

There has been no limit to the repercussions of the Irish question. Some years later I talked to an Englishwoman who had lived in Korea in the early days of the Japanese occupation. She told me a Korean child playing innocently by the side of the road had been killed by a Japanese soldier because he thought she had made an offensive gesture. When the English protested to the Japanese commander, his first words were: "We, too, have an Ireland."

On my trip Home I did not go to Ireland. Time and money were short. I could have paid only the briefest of visits, and I came to the conclusion that it would not be worth while. I must confess, however, my state of mind was a factor. To me Ireland was shrouded in the tragedy of lost opportunities and implacable passions. I was sick at heart at what had happened, from the Easter Rebellion to the Treaty and after. Dublin was scarred and peopled with ghosts. What I would have liked best was to see the West—with its memories of Somerville and Ross, "George A. Birmingham", Synge, Emily Lawless, and Stanley Weyman's *Wild Geese*. The policy of Eire since 1939 has helped to put me on the side of Northern Ireland on the partition issue. I join in the prayer of many that some day Ireland will be united and that union will be attached to the British Commonwealth.

### *Chapter Thirteen*

## BABES IN THE DEPRESSION WOOD

*Years of Easy Street—Acceptance Without Inquiry—Weakness of Arbitration System—Post-war Problems—“Leave Everything to Britain” No Longer Sufficient—Blast of Depression—Plight of Relief Workers—Rise of Labour—Rootless Intellectualism in Armistice Years—New Zealand Learns the Hard Way—Respect for Ideas—New Zealand Brains Abroad.*

I RETURNED TO AUCKLAND in the late spring of 1926, a fuller and, I hope, a wiser man, and because I had enlarged my experience, a better New Zealander. It would have been pleasant to live in England for some years with a congenial job. Not that I had been offered one, and I could hardly have accepted it if I had. However, I would have wished to return to New Zealand in the end. This was my country. If I saw its faults more clearly from visiting England, I also saw its virtues. So back again to the newspaper round, the job of helping to edit an evening paper. That year 1926 was roughly a half-way date in New Zealand's post-war history. It was eight years from the end of the first war. Eight years later the country was looking back on some years of depression, and wondering when the grip was going to be eased. In another year the Labour Party was to sweep the country.

Mr Massey had died in 1925 and had been succeeded by Mr Gordon Coates, a leader in the prime of a very vigorous manhood. Coates was fertile in ideas and ready and unconventional in execution of them. If it was a weakness that he lacked intellectual training, he shared this with other leaders; it did not prevent him from being the first Prime Minister to establish a “Brains Trust” close to himself. Probably his chief handicap as a leader was his lack of wisdom in playing the political game. He was not nearly so astute as Seddon or Massey. Even his virtue of blunt speech was a liability. One often longs for a leader who will say to the importunate and the foolish who take up his time: “Go to blazes!” Coates was inclined to take that line, and it cost him votes. However, he was a man. The last proof he gave of this was in the second war. Out of office, he was called to the War Cabinet by the Labour Government, and it is said that Mr Peter

Fraser, the Prime Minister, found his knowledge (he had fought with distinction in the first war) and his character, invaluable.

A properly organized Prime Minister's Department containing experts and seeking expert advice outside, which Coates and George Forbes developed between the wars, was a precedent of profoundly important changes in our national condition. New Zealand was plunged into a new and toppling world. Hitherto, at the back of all the political struggles and labour unrest, was a relatively simple economic set-up, which statesmen, politicians and public accepted without much inquiry. From the middle nineties, when the first depression had lifted, onwards to the close of the first war and after, prices rose and production leaped up and up. We sold our produce to Britain, which provided an extending and reliable market, and bought goods from her in return. Indeed, owing to the convertibility of sterling, we could buy from all the world. There was no difficulty about exchange. The money Britain lent us helped to finance our trade. Prices and easiness of marketing bred a spirit of complacent optimism. There was little study of public economics. When Sidney Webb, the famous English Fabian, visited New Zealand in the nineties, the first period of advanced social legislation, he commented scathingly on the absence of research. The system of State conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes was established in 1894. Not until 1940, forty-six years afterwards, was provision made at any university college for special research into social relations in industry, and when this was done it was by private benefaction. Industrial research was left to the individual efforts of those university professors or lecturers who might be enthusiastic enough to take it up. It is only fair to university staffs to point out that they were heavily loaded with work, and that in those days such research could not be regarded as a normal feature of universities in England. Moreover, political science was a degree subject in our University, and in this century it has received increasing attention.

Knowing what we do now, it is almost incredible that the arbitration system was allowed to go on for so long without any background. The number of small concerns, where contact between employer and employed was necessarily close, gave great scope for experiment in industrial relationships, but little or nothing was done. There were countries that were more progressive. With us, year after year, it was a hammer and tongs fight between the unions demanding higher wages, shorter hours and better conditions, and the employers opposing them more or

less. The vast third party, the public, was not represented. The infinitely complex problem of managing men and women, of intimate daily relations between managers and hands—the question why one factory, poorly furnished with amenities, was a happy place, and another, with every welfare device, was not—all this was beyond the ken of the authorities and the parties. The opportunity of fostering a real sense of responsibility on both sides was passed by. Arbitration Court, rigidly constructed, was presented with part of a problem and expected to solve it as if it were the whole. The weakening effect of this policy has been publicly recognized by old hands in the Labour movement. When, in the second war, New Zealand factories had to make a new range of war supplies and industrial harmony became vital, the Government cast round for someone who knew something about industrial psychology, and borrowed a philosophy lecturer from Victoria College. Systematic work in this field is now organized in a government department.

Into this community, accustomed to think in ruts and distrustful of the expert, blew winds of post-war problems, culminating in the hurricane of the depression. Finance was jolted by war expenditure and the need for finding land for returned soldiers. To a much greater extent than before New Zealand found its own loan money. Settlement of soldiers was made highly expensive by the price to which, in the face of repeated warnings by the Chairman of the Bank of New Zealand, farm-land had soared. At the door of the English market, on which the New Zealand farmer twelve thousand miles away depended, you could buy better land equipped with far more substantial buildings, at a fraction of prices current in this country. True, we had important advantages in climate, but those were already capitalized in the price of the land. This inflation was partly due to speculation in farms. Especially in the North Island, there was much buying, not to develop the place over the years, but to sell at a profit. I have heard of a man who passed from one to another of twenty-eight farms. Motor transport produced a crop of problems. New Zealand developed one of the highest rates of cars in proportion to population. The more popular motoring became, the greater the demand for better roads. This was effectively met by building main highways and taxing the motorist for them. It was more difficult to decide what to do for the railways when they met road competition. The railways had cost a great deal more over the years than they would have if construction had not been influenced by political considerations. When they enjoyed a monopoly in

land transport, the railways were insufficiently progressive. Certain arrangements for its convenience, to which the public has long been accustomed, were obtained with difficulty. The way the railways bestirred themselves to get custom when the motor-bus and motor-lorry came along, had its amusing side. The State owned the railways, and a question Governments now had to ask themselves was, how far were they justified in using their legislature to protect their system from competition. It may be that this has not yet been answered satisfactorily.

In external affairs there were two new experiences. The Dominion became a member of the League of Nations. This distinction and responsibility aroused little enthusiasm. The Prime Minister himself did not like the League. "Let us leave the League of Nations to fools like Bob Cecil," Mr Massey remarked on his return from the Peace Conference.\* Professor F. L. W. Wood of Victoria College, in his *New Zealand and the World*, puts it more politely when he says that "the whole idea of the League was a distasteful piece of idealism foisted on the Empire—like mandates—by the United States of America. Massey thought that New Zealand's contribution to the League was at best a waste of money, only to be endured because it would not otherwise be decent to accept the Samoan mandate; and membership of the League was an awkward reminder that some people thought of Dominions as autonomous communities instead of loyal dependencies." Massey was deeply attached to the British connection, and alarmed at any tendency to weaken it. In view of recent developments, there is a great deal to be said for his general point of view.

New Zealand went so far in its attitude to the League as to propose that the Dominions should not exercise their right to act independently within the League, but should "transmit representations through Britain after consultation". Sir Francis Bell, Leader of the New Zealand Bar, and the most distinguished of our Elder Statesmen, objected to a Dominion being elected to one of the non-permanent seats in the Council, because (to go on quoting Professor Wood) "it might lead to the undesirable spectacle of a public debate at Geneva between the Mother Country and a minority Dominion: it would either duplicate or cancel Britain's vote." Sir Francis's rule, which interpreted the view of his Government, "was to avoid any suggestion that New Zealand was

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\* I had this from the late Dr H. D. Bamford who travelled with Massey from Vancouver.

entitled to a voice in foreign affairs other than as a very small fraction of that great Empire". New Zealand was capably represented at the League, and did useful work, but till 1935, when the Labour Government took office, it followed the policy of confining criticisms to confidential Imperial discussions, and in major issues reflected the views of Britain.

The Labour Government made a dramatic break from this policy. It had opinions of its own at the League, and expressed them, whether Britain liked it or not. It threw its weight into the fight for more action. "The moral of the Abyssinian failure was, to New Zealand, to put more teeth into the Covenant rather than to follow the popular plan of extracting those which had been decayed, unused." (Again Professor Wood.) . . . "Her (New Zealand's) spokesman repeatedly and often in plain undiplomatic language, urged that the League should be true to its principles in organizing assistance to victims and in refusing to recognize ill-gotten gains." There was considerable public support for this stand. Many of us were increasingly critical of British policy and were worried about what was happening in Spain and in the League. We had no doubt that Munich was a disastrous humiliation.

Our connection with one activity of the League, the International Labour Office, may be mentioned to illustrate the limited, self-satisfied, unimaginative outlook of the Government, and a large section of the public. The official view was that New Zealand led the world in labour legislation, and in that respect had nothing to learn from other countries; therefore the expense of sending delegates to the International Labour Office's conference would not be justified. The *Auckland Star* hit this attitude hard. Apart from the possibility that New Zealand might have something to learn, had it not something to teach, and was it not New Zealand's duty to teach it? It was not until 1930 that we were represented at an International Labour Office conference.

To discuss at length the complex question of New Zealand's relations with the outside world is not my business. I touch on it to show that new forces were levering us out of old troughs of thought. We were being educated in new duties. It is a far cry from the old disposition to leave everything to Britain, and the set-up today, when New Zealand counts for something in the world's councils, and appoints and receives diplomatic representatives. There remains a word or two to be said about the mandated territory of Samoa. We already had the Cook Islands under our jurisdiction. They gave no trouble, and New

Zealanders took little interest in them. Many (including myself at one time) could not have distinguished Rarotonga from Tonga. When we took over Western Samoa as a mandate we had no civil servants specially trained for such a job. Had the Government taken advice given to it to borrow men from the Colonial Office Service, it might not have run into such serious trouble in that land of unrest. Our good record with the Maori makes it all the more surprising that New Zealanders did not realize that official service in tropical dependencies required special equipment and inducements. New Zealand's Pacific Island Services were a back-water branch of the general Civil Service. An able and ambitious man found little to attract him there. Only in recent years, greatly assisted in the process by the impact of war in the Pacific, have we begun to understand the nature of the problems presented by Island peoples, and to see that specialized knowledge must be brought to bear on them. With its Maori race at home and an "Empire" stretching to within ten degrees of the equator, New Zealand should be a centre of anthropological and general Pacific studies worthy of the world's attention. There is considerable comfort in the fact that the Trusteeship Committee of United Nations is pleased with our showing in Samoa.

A Wellington editor once said that as news a dog-fight in Lambton Quay (the city's main street) was worth more than a ministerial crisis in Europe. No post-war oversea responsibility could affect New Zealanders a tithe as deeply as the depression that struck the country in the late twenties. It was little or no consolation to victims to know they were not alone, that they were caught in a world storm. There had been nothing like it for over forty years. Prices fell and unemployment rose. We began to feel seriously the effects of land inflation and unthinking confidence. "A farm," it was said, "is a piece of land entirely surrounded by mortgages." In two years the value of our exports and imports dropped by many millions. The price of wool fell so low that it hardly paid to carry the clip to the local sales. The average price of butter in London dropped from 184s. to 66s. 6d. In 1931 there were as many as 54,000 men on the unemployment registers, and wholly or in part a charge on the Unemployment Fund. In 1933 the peak rose to 79,000—in a population of a million and a half. Such figures were far from representing the total of distress. During seven months of 1932 the Auckland City Mission provided 37,000 free beds and 102,000 full meals, and in one year the Mission doctor had 8200 consultations.

All Arbitration Court award rates were cut by ten per cent,

and unions were virtually denied access to the Courts. Mortgage rates were written down by legislation, and provision made for reduction of principal. Every class suffered. Many farmers had to leave their properties. Some of them had made their farms from bush country and now saw the fruits of years of back-breaking work taken from them. Many others were kept on by mortgagees wise enough to see that a tried caretaker might be more profitable in the long run than a new-comer, if a new-comer could be obtained. Perhaps the classes hardest hit, however, were the city office and factory workers who were thrown on the market. It proved very difficult or impossible to find them suitable work. Many of these men, some of them middle-aged, were put into out-of-door jobs for which they were physically unfitted. These relief jobs carried wages lower than the standard rate, and there was a temptation to employers to employ relief workers at the expense of the ordinary hands.

The depression hit us all the harder because it took us by surprise. We had lived long in an easy groove, taking prosperity for granted. To some extent this was true of every country. Britain, however, had had much more experience of unemployment, and had met it many years earlier by an insurance scheme contemptuously called "the dole". Our position was something like that of the United States. To a lesser degree we experienced the exasperation and bewilderment that possessed Americans when they found that, after all, their proud country was not specially favoured by the gods, but, economically, was mortal. We had made no preparation for such a winter of hard times. We would not have "the dole"—not we! The ignorance on this matter was extraordinary. I talked one day to two well-informed Auckland businessmen. One was a man of particularly wide and deep reading, and of liberal opinions. It was news to them that the British "dole" came from a contributing scheme of insurance, which had then been in operation a good many years. The Prime Minister, George Forbes, came back from the Imperial Conference in London in 1930 resolved not to introduce the "dole", but circumstances were too much for the Government. People could not be allowed to starve.

Some of those who remembered the eighties thought the slump of that time was worse than this one. It may have been, but in the nineteen-thirties the temper of victims was much sharper. In the interval the vote had been extended to everybody. People were better educated, better informed, more conscious of their rights. The standards of living had risen. The community had gone be-

yond the pioneering stage, when people in difficulties were more or less content to make shift with a sort of camping life. So, altogether, New Zealanders were not disposed to accept docilely unemployment, small subsistence benefits or charity. The Government produced some ideas and was not idle; what it lacked was imagination. There was no national plan of public works to assist unemployment, no policy of making bad times a preparation for better. Expenditure on public works was severely cut. Railway construction almost ceased. Lines were left unfinished, and the tracks deteriorated. Some of the relief workers put on to jobs like chipping weeds on roads must have thought they could have been more profitably absorbed. Nor was there enough imagination in the day-to-day attitude to the unemployed. One Minister told a deputation that he too had suffered: he had had his salary cut. The money paid out in relief might have been more satisfying if a more active and intelligent interest had been taken in conditions, such as those in relief camps. Numbers of unemployed were put into camps on low wages and separated from their wives and families. Cheerless camps in the country in winter were an ideal forcing ground for grievances. They produced this kind of cry of bitterness and disillusionment, written by a contemporary poet, A. R. D. Fairburn.

Back-blocks camps for the outcast, the superfluous;  
reading back-date magazines, rolling cheap cigarettes;  
not mated; witness to the constriction of life as essential  
to the maintenance of the rate of profit,  
as distinct from the gross increment of wealth.

Whatever may be thought of their economics, these lines were a new voice in New Zealand. The bitter tone that came into our literature was largely a product of the depression. Many of our writers observed keenly what was going on. Some were actual victims. Of course all the fault did not lie with the authorities. It was very difficult to raise money. The unemployed were not the only sufferers. Mrs Helen Wilson, a farmer's wife, contrasted the lot of young single men in camps with that of surrounding farmers. Among other things she noted that the boys received ten shillings a week pocket money. "The farmers received no ten bob a week. They never saw money. Every penny earned was already mortgaged to the dairy factory, which allowed them the necessities of life. . . ." The unemployed themselves were not blameless, as witness the riots in Auckland and Wellington. There were business men and farmers who were disturbed when they saw a relief worker leaning on his shovel. Quite likely the

leaner was a middle-aged man who had never before done manual work. Some of us longed to take city grumblers and set them to work with shovels at the wages these men were getting. We fancied their backs would have given out soon.

The first war and the armistice years confused politics by bringing strange compulsions upon statesmen. Conservatives who had been brought up to oppose State intervention on principle found themselves interfering with freedom of contract. Leaders wandered over a darkling plain looking for an easy, convenient way forward, but were forced to take hard and distasteful action. "New occasions teach new duties," but the process of education is apt to be painful. During the slump necessity produced at least one significant epigram—that the mortgagee had to be protected against himself.

One political party had a clearer idea than the others what it wanted to do, and a stronger will to do it. This was Labour. In the twenties it had risen to be the official opposition. The coalition between Reformers, or Conservatives, and Liberals, made Labour the only alternative as a government. When the general election of 1935 arrived the depression was beginning to lift, but the memory of the worst of it was potent. "Don't you know you're going out?" an acquaintance of mine asked a Minister. "If so, you're the only one who doesn't!" Reform had governed, or helped to govern, for twenty-three years, with one break. Numbers of people were tired of "the old gang". There was real meaning in the phrase. During the depression, when there was the strongest need for ideas and vigour, a middle-aged nonentity was chosen to be a Minister of Public Works. Labour swept the country. In a House of eighty members, the party numbered fifty-five. This was by no means entirely a wage-earners' victory. A large section of the middle-class voted for Labour. This middle-class accretion held in the next election, in 1938, and then gradually fell away, till in 1949 this recession helped to put Labour out of office.

The world cannot be proud of the armistice years. It is a commonplace to say that it was a period of disappointment and disillusionment, as the high hopes faded that came with victory, and it was apparent that democracy could defeat a military foe but not an economic one. Suppose, however, we try to add up all the bereavement and misery, the disappointment and poverty, the failure to keep faith with those who died, and the pitiful experiences of many who survived; suppose we take into account all the suffering and failure and selfishness and stupidity, in-

dividual and collective. Does all this justify the spirit of surrender that was such a feature of creative and critical expression in the twenties and thirties, and of certain layers of social life—the dreary introspection, the cynical hopelessness, the creed that nothing mattered? History will label this the age of defeatism. Much of its literature might bear the caption: “Dethronement of Nobility.” Those who considered themselves intellectuals were largely to blame. It was a difficult time for this class, said John Buchan. “They found themselves living among the fears and uncertainties of the middle ages, without the support of the medieval faith.” The brittle intellectuals, as Kipling called them, huddled in coterie corners and moaned. One suspected some of them had suffered little, directly or indirectly, from the war, but they showed less pluck than many a maimed soldier. Someone whose name I don’t know—I got the lines appropriately enough from the *Journal of the Kipling Society*—wrote of this class:

For whom when all goes ill it falls to verse  
 If possible to go a little worse;  
 And when the gates of heaven on their hinge  
 Cry ominously, not content to cringe,—  
 Clap their small hands as the great irons lunge,  
 And on the world’s behalf, throw up the sponge.

The badge of courage glows in the words of Eugene Lee Masters’s housewife of the old American days, whose record could be paralleled in our own annals. She was married for seventy years and had twelve children. Eight of them died before she was sixty. She spun, she wove, she kept house, she nursed the sick. At ninety-six she had lived enough; that was all.

What is this I hear of sorrow and weakness?  
 Anger, discontent, and drooping hopes?  
 Degenerate sons and daughters,  
 Life is too strong for you—  
 It takes life to love life.

There is comfort in the thought that during the depression, and through the other disappointments of the armistice years, a large proportion of voiceless people everywhere faced life with something like the spirit of this American pioneer. They might have thought more deeply; on the other hand, thought did not possess them. They went on with the daily job of living and did not whine. In 1939 something happened to put the old-fashioned virtues back in the forefront of battle, visible to all.

There were sprouts of this rootless and sapless intellectualism

in New Zealand, but naturally it would be rare in a small and relatively unsophisticated society. On the contrary, New Zealand was in a position to benefit by the depression. Hard times, following the demands of a new era, made people think and express themselves. They nourished literature and the arts. They gave the man with special knowledge better opportunities and wider recognition. Ideas began to command respect, and research made headway. The cushions of complacency built up by long years of prosperity became hard forms. As Oliver Duff says in his *New Zealand Now*, we had "come to the end of blind living". "We can no longer dig gold out of the ground with a butcher's knife as Gabriel Read did, or put a match to the bush and wait till the rain and a little fertilizer bring gold out of the ashes." There was a marked increase in interest in economics, and it began to dawn on New Zealanders that what they called the practical man might have his limitations, and the trained specialist his uses. The Government gathered specialists about it. The university professor came out of his study and lecture room to advise the Government and talk to the crowd. It was another stage in our growing up.

All this time New Zealand was continuing to send a substantial proportion of its best brains abroad. There were at least three reasons for this: the smallness of our society, with its restricted opportunities (the Dominion did not reach the million and a half mark till 1930); the lack of appreciation of exceptional talent; and the need for study abroad. A third reason may be that by nature New Zealanders are travellers. Conditions in their long, narrow island system make them move round. In his book *Report on Experience*, my son, the late John Mulgan, who went from New Zealand to Oxford, described them as "often wanderers and restless unhappy men. They come from the most beautiful country in the world, but it is a small country and very remote. After a while this isolation oppresses them and they go abroad. They roam the world looking not for adventure but for satisfaction. They run service cars in Iraq, gold-mines in Nevada, or newspapers in Fleet Street. They are queer, lost, eccentric, pervading people who will seldom admit to the deep desire that is in all of them to go home and live quietly in New Zealand again." Those at home "are all the time wanting to set out across the wide seas that surround them in order to find the rest of the world".

Students go overseas to extend their special studies and many do not return. Other New Zealanders, qualified in their callings,

also find conditions "over there" more attractive. Others, with no special qualifications, sail into the blue to seek their fortunes. Successful New Zealand emigrants have been found far and wide, and in every walk of life. Doctors and engineers seem to provide the largest classes. One thinks of Harold Gillies and A. H. McIndoe, plastic surgeons, and A. M. Hamilton, bridge-designer and author of *Road Through Kurdistan*. There have been artists (Frances Hodgkins); architects (A. D. Connell and Basil Ward); journalists (Harold Williams, Foreign Editor of *The Times*); authors (G. B. Lancaster and Hector Bolitho); administrators (William Marris of the Indian Civil Service and Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, also a distinguished classical scholar); musicians (Rosina Buckman); aviators (Jean Batten); explorers (Frank Worsley); adventurous business men (the Nairn Brothers who started and developed the motor passenger service between Damascus and Baghdad); scholars (Kenneth Sisam, Secretary of the Clarendon Press, and Ronald Syme, Camden Professor of Ancient History, Oxford). This very brief list, which is little more than a road sign, does not include those New Zealanders who have become world figures—Ernest Rutherford, Katherine Mansfield, Truby King, David Low, and Edmund Hillary.

In the thirties New Zealanders began to take notice of this export of brains, and their attention was sharpened by the celebration of the national centennial in 1940, and the war. In the centennial time it was my pleasant task to edit a series of national radio talks called "New Zealand Brains Abroad". The scripts were based on a collection of careers made by Mr Bernard Magee of Oamaru and published in the Christchurch *Press*. This list of achievements was a revelation to me, and I am sure it was to listeners. The success of these New Zealanders may be attributed to a good foundation in human stock; conditions of life that developed energy, independence, and initiative; and a sound educational system, which has provided ladders for outstanding ability to climb from primary school to university. Now New Zealanders were increasingly conscious of the need to keep as much of this ability as possible at home, or to draw it back after it had graduated, academically or otherwise, in the greater world. In this, as in other respects, the village or small town mentality was widening into a metropolitan or national vision.

## *Chapter Fourteen*

### **A N EDITOR'S CHAIR**

*Evening Paper World—Rush and Leisure—Convention in Editorials—Comedies of Hand-writing—Encouraging the Local Writer—Complications in Reviewing—English Publishers and Local Market—Some Newspaper Achievements—War Memorial Museum—University College Building—A Newspaper War.*

FROM THE BEGINNING OF 1916 to September 1935, shortly before the arrival of the first Labour Government, I worked on the editorial staff of the *Auckland Star*. Returning as leader-writer, I became literary editor, and as such continued to write editorials. What I said in the last chapter gives, I hope, some idea of the new and bewildering situations that confronted editors as well as statesmen. This, however, was mostly concerned with headaches caused by local problems. We journalists had also to cope with the Treaty of Versailles and the spanner that J. M. Keynes threw into the reparation works when he wrote his book on the economics of the peace; with the birth of the League of Nations and the defection of the United States—one of the great refusals of history and probably the most tragic of all in its consequences; with the rise of Mussolini—have you forgotten that he was the first Fascist dictator, some years before Hitler?; with Hitler himself, who began as a joke; with the Japanese invasion of China and the Italian wars and the Irish Free State Treaty; with the depressed areas of Britain and fourteen million unemployed in the United States. We had to comment on these things without the inside information that is available to journalists on the spot. All events are blurred by time, and over these particular ones fell the shadow of world-wide catastrophe. For the curious, however, there are newspaper files, what Kipling calls “the all-recording, all-effacing files”.

Who remembers  
Forty-odd-years old Septembers?—  
Only sextons paid to dig among the files  
(Such as I am, born and bred among the files).

You do not think much on those lines when the daily newspaper rush is on. I have written something of the domestic and

social advantages of working on an evening paper. Because it is written and put together in the daytime, while items of news are in the making, an evening paper generates a fiercer rush than a morning. The day is behind a morning paper. The business of courts and day meetings is over, and news can be seen in perspective. There are meetings at night, but few run to a late hour. All reports are complete. Some big news may break at night, like a fire, or the Auckland riot of 1932, when the chief reporter of the *New Zealand Herald* told his staff to drop everything and concentrate on the sensation of the hour. Usually, however, by ten o'clock or so in the evening the sub-editors of a morning paper should know where they stand. By midnight news may have stopped coming in, save by late cable, and the office has closed down on advertisements much earlier. The household does not look for its paper till six or seven or eight next morning. It follows that sub-editors have reasonable time to classify items of news and lay out their pages attractively.

On an evening paper the task is more difficult. The work of setting and making-up runs parallel with the news. An important court case or conference may start in the morning and last all day. The evening paper receives a report of it in sections almost up to the time of going to press, say three o'clock. News of many other kinds comes up to this last moment; and in the days I write of, some advertisements were taken late. Unlike a morning paper, an evening one is read by the public within a few minutes of being printed, and less time is available for complete distribution. The household wants its evening paper delivered not later than round about six. This gives morning papers an advantage in catering for country readers. An evening paper cannot be mapped out and finished in detail so well as a morning paper. The heavier pressure during the last hours increases liability to error in writing, sub-editing, type-setting, proof-reading and type-correction. It is easier to misplace a line of type, perhaps with an unfortunate conjunction as a result. "The coroner returned a verdict of death from (end of line) X . . . 's Stomach Powders are valuable for acidity." In all circumstances, the wonder is not that there are so many mistakes in newspapers, but that there are so few.

A certain amount of editorial matter has to be written. As a rule it is less now than it was years ago. Journalists seem to agree that not many people read editorials, but the same can be said of serious articles in general in comparison with news. The better the editorial writing the more attention it will get, though the

total of readers may remain small. "What people cannot endure," says Bernard Shaw, "is the pompous oracle with nothing to say, the noodle's oration, the twaddler's pulpit platitudes and the ranter's tirade. They prefer snippets because the snippets are really much better."

A leader-writer cannot keep editorials out of his mind for long. He thinks about them the night before, and may do some reading in preparation. At breakfast he grabs the morning paper and is lost to his family. By the time he reaches the office he probably has some idea what he is going to write about. There is a conference between the editor and his leader-writers; what subjects shall be taken and what said. It is often charged against the Press that editorials are the opinions of only one man. Sometimes they are, but they may be a composite opinion arrived at after a long, searching discussion. Then the staff sets to work to write. There may be a number of things to look up: what a certain Minister said three years earlier; how much trade another country does with us; the terms of a treaty; a comparison of departmental costs. Here the office library and filing system come in. A leader-writer must be a rapid reader and writer. He must be able to get at the heart of a document quickly, and often he cannot afford to spend much time looking for the right word. He does well to bear in mind that no matter what his subject is, there are bound to be persons in the community who know more about it than he does. When he has written his article, perhaps with some sweat, the sub-editor or the editor may come in with a piece of news that means drastic alteration to his article, or turning to another subject.

The leader-writer sees a proof and a revised proof of his article, after it has been through the proof-readers' room. The editor also sees a proof. Despite all this care, a mistake in fact, construction, or a wrong letter, may leap at them from the printed page. The chief trouble about the linotype machine is that alteration in a line in proof means resetting the whole line, and in this process queer things may happen. In one of his Saturday leaders in the *Press*, of which he was justifiably proud, Triggs began with Danton's motto: "De l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace!" He put a comma in the proof, and it came out in print "de p'audace, de f'audace . . .!" The citizen may say as he reads his paper: "I can't think why those chaps don't take more trouble. They really are very careless."

There are many complications in the day of an editor or leader-writer. Visitors do not worry you so much on a morning paper

as on an evening. By day they are apt to drop in at any time, and if you make yourself too accessible, you may land in serious trouble. There are many classes of visitors you must see as part of your job, but even when you are talking to some very important person, you may find it difficult to give him your whole attention. "How the dickens am I going to get this article done in time if this chap doesn't go soon?" Nearly all newspaper work is done against time. There are opposite pulls, the desire to be left alone to do your work, and the desire to keep in personal touch with outside happenings and opinions. An editor can be too social or too much withdrawn. To quote Bernard Shaw again: "A daily paper should have at least three editors, each having one day on and two days off. At present the papers are twenty years behind the times because the editors are recluses." Then the telephone; like other conveniences it can be a curse. One of my most embarrassing experiences in Auckland was being rung up by the Governor-General in person. I had to take the call in the sub-editor's room, where three men were writing, and people coming and going. The telephone was right up against the copy chute from the Telegraph Office, a thing like the cash conveyors in shops. As I strove to hear what His Excellency was saying, the carriers kept banging in my ear. However, I managed to get through the conversation without mishap.

There were letters to the editors, almost a job in themselves in these good old days of big papers. The correspondence column is important and very dangerous. You have to keep a balance giving both sides a show, and look out closely for the hidden motive. My old chief T. W. Leys gave me sound advice on the subject. Do not give the anonymous correspondent as much rope in criticism as the man who signs his name. Anonymous correspondents are a large body. The Chancellor of the University, Sir David (and Mr Justice) Smith, has drawn attention to the very high proportion of anonymous letter in the New Zealand Press. In all but one of the papers examined, the number was about three times that of signed letters. Sir David thinks this indicates a lack of some moral quality in the citizen who is concerned with public matters. I should attribute this condition mainly to the smallness of our community. So many people are afraid of what their neighbour will say. Be that as it may, New Zealanders, courageous in many respects, have curious streaks of timidity. The correspondence columns of our newspapers, however, are far from reflecting the intelligence of society. There must be many people who have something useful to say, but do not say

it. The man with a bee in his bonnet says too much. You do not realize how many cranks there are till you run a newspaper.

Often at the end of a day spent in writing and seeing people, I would take away a bagful of letters and scripts to plough through at home. "Plough" is the right word up to a point. Some letters have to be punctuated and turned into good English. Contributed articles may require touching up and rewriting in places. This is a suitable spot to say something about hand-writing, a subject both humorous and painful. When I began newspaper work, and for some years after, everything was hand-written. Now typing of copy is pretty general, but the man who edits a script must still use his pen or pencil. I often wonder how sub-editors and compositors got on in the old days. Probably the general level of hand-writing was higher. My own hand is atrocious. My family thinks I am proud of the fact, but I am not. I cannot read it myself sometimes, and it has led me into awkward situations. Once I wrote a letter for the *Star* to a trade journal, signing myself "A. E. Mulgan, Literary Editor". It came out in print "A. E. Finlayson". I used to take care to see proofs of my stuff in the *Star*, but I omitted to do this with a report of a talk I gave on "Parody". Among the parodies I cited was J. C. Squire's on the plays of Maurice Maeterlinck. I may say the parody was so good that when we read it over the fire at home side by side with an original, it was difficult to say which was which. When I read my newspaper that evening I found that I had referred to a parody of a person called "Walter Hunch". If you do not believe this, try writing "Maeterlinck" quickly in a sprawling hand and I think you will see that this might become a new author called "Walter Hunch". At any rate it did. I read the report in a tram and I thought: "Good God, is everybody looking at me?" Of course no one was. Only one person mentioned the matter to me. Probably most readers thought "Walter Hunch" was a real writer whom they ought to know but did not.

I learned long ago to type my signature to all business letters, and am amazed that some business men fail to take this precaution. Once or twice in my handling of letters to the editor I was driven to the expedient of cutting out the signature and pasting it on the return envelope, leaving it to the Post Office to do the rest. Business men who use jungle-like scrawls as signatures deserve to be treated in the same way. I have had indecipherable signatures (unaccompanied by typing of the name) from a University College Registrar and the head of a government department. They addressed me as "Dear Mr Mulgan", and I wanted to

return the gesture, but I had to make it "Dear Sir". A business acquaintance of mine received a letter that annoyed him from a subordinate in a government office. He showed the letter to the permanent head and asked him if he thought it was a proper one. "No," said the head, "and I don't know who wrote it!" My acquaintance received a smoothing-over letter from the same subordinate, but as the signature was again untyped, he still did not know who his correspondent was. Some years ago I received a personal letter that required an answer. The writer did not give a detailed address. To this day his signature has defeated me and everybody else. I even took the letter to my bank, but the experts there were baffled. Since my correspondent addressed me by my Christian name, he may be someone I know well. Not having received an answer from me, perhaps he is thinking: "That man Mulgan hasn't any manners!"

In the old spacious days when we ran up to forty-eight pages in the Saturday *Star*, we had a good deal of room for contributed articles, and I got much pleasure out of editing the front page of the Supplement, with its special articles and pictures, and the book column on the following page. The *Star* can look back with some satisfaction to the encouragement it gave to writers. We collected from far and near. Among them were some well-known names, but we were always on the look-out for new talent. This is not so plentiful as you might think. We gave a monthly prize for a short story, but there were some months when we didn't get a story worth printing. We introduced original verse, and paid for it—very little, it is true, but still something. Some of the best poets in New Zealand wrote for the *Star*, and I have been pleasantly reminded of this by acknowledgments in their volumes and in anthologies. The poem I remember best was one that Robin Hyde (Iris Wilkinson) wrote about the feelings of a bewildered Italian conscript sent to fight in Abyssinia. It was a jolly good poem, and I took the unprecedented step of starring it on the editorial page.

We received many books from England for review. It was a joyous excitement to open a pile of parcels. English publishers treated us well, and we did our best with their books, and saw that they got copies of the reviews. Perhaps they treated us rather too well. Why should a paper in little New Zealand get a sumptuous two-volume limited edition of Milton, a scholar's delight, printed by a famous press? However, it is on my shelves now. The most curious book I received was one called *The Art of Change-Ringing*. For a moment I thought it referred to a counter swindle

known as "ringing the change", but it was a treatise on the art of that particular form of bell-ringing which Dorothy Sayers has glorified in her novel, *The Nine Tailors*. There were then two sets of such bells in New Zealand, and I doubt whether, even by canvassing, a dozen copies of the book could have been sold through the country. This was one of the things that made me wonder who chose the review books for oversea papers.

The distance between England and New Zealand produces complications in a book business. I have seen a circular to a New Zealand bookseller offering a book on terms within a certain period which unfortunately would have been up by the time the order was received by mail. An English bookseller need not keep large stocks of a book; he can replenish his shelves at short notice. In New Zealand a bookseller has to order from a distance of twelve thousand miles. He knows that if he is caught short it will take some weeks for supplies to reach him. If he overestimates the demand he will be landed with dead stock. At the time I write of, English publishers were wont to send review copies without much regard to the stocking of local shops. Few employed resident agents. Moreover, review copies came by mail, and stocks more slowly as cargo. It could easily happen that when a book was reviewed there were no copies for sale. I had a complaint on this score after I had given a special article to a book from a famous London house. I put the position before the publishers, but never received even an acknowledgment.

This state of affairs is liable to be particularly rough on New Zealanders who publish in England. They naturally look to their own country for custom, perhaps for a large part of what they hope for. They may read excellent notices in their own Press, and then find that the local booksellers cannot supply the immediate demand. By the time new stocks arrive, interest may have fallen off considerably. Experience with my own books taught me to be active in liaison between publishers and booksellers and newspapers, and I was led to remark that it took nearly as much time and energy to sell a book in New Zealand as to write one. Through better representation of English publishers in New Zealand and the use of air-mails, the position is a good deal better than it was, but sea distance still presents a difficulty for booksellers and authors. Few though we New Zealanders are, we offer a good market.

There is a lot of work in a long review of a big, important book. I may instance T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 660 pages. It took me a fortnight to read the book at odd times,

and even then I skipped a bit, and five hours to write the column and a half review. It is good fun to get one's teeth into a job like that. At current rates in the New Zealand Press I would have been paid thirty shillings or a couple of pounds for the article. Rates are higher today. Some years later, when I met the late Dr R. J. Tillyard, Chief Commonwealth Entomologist, I found that he had reviewed the book for an Australian paper, and we compared notes. It had been a big job for him, too, and he thought the payment of seven guineas was inadequate. If I did not tell him I wished I had half his complaint, I thought so. Seven guineas was a good fee as fees went, but for a man of Tillyard's standing it was not startling. In addition to his fee, however, the reviewer gets the book.

Looking back on his life, a journalist may find it hard to say what he has achieved, individually or collectively. He may have been for years on the unsuccessful side in politics, and seen cause after cause fail. It is admitted that editorial influence is not what it used to be, but this is not the kind of thing that can always be measured. I recall two important public improvements that the *Star* helped to obtain in my time. One was a permanent home for the University College. Strictly speaking, I should say "temporarily permanent", for since then the site question has been revived. Here was an indication of the difference between the development of Auckland and of Christchurch and Dunedin. Auckland University College was founded in 1883, and its home for many years was a block of wooden buildings in Eden Street, part of which had been the premises of the first New Zealand Parliament. Then the college moved to the old Grammar School in Symonds Street; and not until 1926 did it get its present "permanent" home (certainly permanent in materials), in Princes Street. Aucklanders made jokes about the "wedding cake" tower of the new college, but I think the building has crept into their affections. As the architect, an American, remarked at the time, they did not like the style because they could not label it. The average New Zealander knew two styles, Gothic, that is something resembling an English cathedral, and classical, something with columns. At any rate, at long last, eighty-six years after the foundation of the city, Auckland acquired a university building that had beauty and dignity in design and setting.

The other achievement in which the *Star* had a hand was the War Memorial Museum (the war of 1914-18) on Domain Hill. Fortunately Auckland was united in this project; the drive for money was very well organized; the architectural competition

yielded a first-class design; and the result was a noble building on a superb site. The pillared classical front overlooked an island scene that must have suggested a poignant comparison to some of the New Zealanders who fought in Greece at a later time, and high upon it were carved the words of Pericles to the Athenians: "The whole earth is the sepulchre of famous men...." Thucydides would recognize something Greek in the scene, and understand the annual pilgrimage of citizens to this shrine on Anzac Day. It is an irony that in a country which has erected a monument of such design, linking us with the glories of the ancient world, Latin and Greek should be pressed back from their already limited ground in our system of education. This was an inspiring example of united civic effort, well directed. The opening of the building was the most impressive public ceremony I have seen. Not all such opportunities were taken. Auckland missed one of developing a civic square, which would have included an adequate library and art gallery. The ratepayers would not have it. That was years ago, since when the library and art gallery have become much more congested. Now another scheme for a civic centre is being considered. It will probably be a better one, if only because it will give more attention to traffic needs, but it will be enormously more expensive. The story of the Sibylline Books in large type should hang on the walls of every parliament and municipal council.

The influence of a newspaper, however, is not to be measured by such direct visible successes or failures alone. It may make itself felt quietly in many directions, and it is exerted through the news and correspondence columns and the special articles, as well as through editorials. Primarily, a newspaper is a trader in news, but opinion cannot be kept out of news. A newspaper is also a forum of opinion, in which all sides should have their say. In this respect the New Zealand Press lives up to the best traditions; it gives news, and views for and against, fairly. I may cite as an example of the non-political influence of the Press, the great increase in interest New Zealanders show in their native wild life—flora and birds and the whole problem of land use. The change since I was young is very marked. When the notornis was rediscovered in the nineteen-forties, the birds were carefully captured in a net, photographed, and released. Scientists would probably have been equally solicitous fifty years earlier. What was more significant was that public opinion was solidly behind their action and the immediate steps taken by the Government to protect the birds. The concern shown for the preservation of

Waipoua kauri forest in North Auckland is another case in point. The kauri is confined by nature to the Auckland province, but right through the country individuals and societies have busied themselves with the future of this magnificent collection at Waipoua, the largest in existence, and one of the botanical wonders of the world. This development of interest in our natural history would have been impossible without steady encouragement from the Press through various departments.

In 1927 another evening paper, the *Sun*, was started in Auckland. It was an off-shoot of the *Sun* in Christchurch, which was founded when I was on the *Press*. Only four metropolitan newspapers have been born in this country in the last half century, and two of these were the *Suns*. Indeed, despite the increase in population, there are fewer newspapers in New Zealand today than there were years ago. The same condition is found in larger countries. Quite a number of London dailies have dropped out in my time. Many of our country papers have disappeared. This is a pity, for country towns and districts have their own life, which should be nourished. We need less centralization, not more. The reasons for this decline here and overseas are the greatly increased cost of starting a paper and running it, the peculiar nature of the newspaper business, and improvement in communications. Newspaper competition is peculiar. A city supports a large number of grocers, drapers and ironmongers, but it cannot support anything like the same number of newspapers. A newspaper lives on advertising revenue, not on sales, and there is not enough advertising business to suffice for a multiplicity of newspapers. Advertising goes where it can do the most business, to the large circulations.

It is extremely difficult to shift a newspaper when it is well dug in—difficult to break down its popularity. Though they may disagree with its politics, people get used to a newspaper. It is like an old suit and a favourite chair. Improvement in transport has favoured city newspapers at the expense of country. When I was young many country districts had a mail only once or twice a week, or less frequently. In out-districts people relied largely on the weekly illustrated paper, which was issued from a daily newspaper office and repeated much of the week's news. These weeklies—the *Auckland Weekly News*; the *New Zealand Mail*, Wellington; the *Weekly Press* and *Canterbury Times*, Christchurch; and the *Otago Witness*, Dunedin—were newspapers as well as magazines. Only the *Weekly News* remains, and it has largely changed its style. Trains and service cars carry newspapers daily to the farmer.

The ease with which the *Sun* was established in Christchurch against complacent establishments may have deceived the proprietors when they decided to invade Auckland. There the old, well-established and wealthy *Star* was ready to fight hard. It is impossible to say what was the effect of this competition on the *Star*, partly because certain improvements were made before the *Sun* started, and might have been introduced in any case. However, competition put the staff on its toes. Getting editions out to time became more important, and one must not be beaten for news. We remodelled the editorial page and got it away earlier. The long editorial section was cut down. A column, with a wider measure, was now the limit for comment, save for very special occasions. This was no bad discipline for leader-writers. It gave us new and pressing interest in word-economy. By then I had fallen under the spell of the *Manchester Guardian*, which I place, with *The Times*, at the head of Commonwealth newspapers. For style I would put the *Guardian* first. Its English has beauty and point; it is bright steel with a true cutting edge. Of the *Manchester Guardian* school, my favourite was C. E. Montague—athlete, scholar, creative writer and critic. Montague's work was delightfully packed with scholarship, and a wholesome wind of commonsense from the outer world blew through it.

The effects of our changes on the public were interesting and amusing. There are numbers of people who do not welcome changes in ideas, conditions, or habits. They like life to run in the accustomed groove. You see that if you change the make-up of a paper. I doubt if there is any respect in which people are more conservative. Some of the *Star*'s faithful old readers were indignant. There were even objections to headings being put on the paragraphs called "locals". In my historical work I have had to look for items in columns of unheaded paragraphs in old newspapers, and what a tedious business it is! However, readers soon got used to our alterations.

The *Sun* lasted three and a half years, and then one Saturday went out suddenly and quietly. But for the slump it might have lasted longer. The Auckland *Sun*, like its Christchurch parent, deserves to be remembered by the literary world for the encouragement it gave to young writers.

The *Star* bought out its rival. We were glad to win the fight, but there was no exultation. We had friends on the *Sun* and felt sorry for them and their colleagues thrown out of a job. In her book of recollections, *Journalese*, Robin Hyde wrote that "among the *Sun*'s

staff that day it was recorded that the *Star* people recorded their success with a champagne dinner. *Vae victis.*" Robin Hyde was gifted as a writer, but as a journalist not very responsible. This *Star* person neither took part in nor heard of any champagne celebration.

## *Chapter Fifteen*

### THE FUTURE OF THE PRESS

*Lecturing on Journalism—Popular Fallacies about Press Law—The Journalist's Motives—Worst Attributed—Social Credit Critic—Sense of Responsibility the Core—An Open Profession—Question of Control: Internal or External?—Newspaper under Socialism—Reform Should be Self-imposed.*

**S**O MUCH FOR THE DAILY ROUND of a New Zealand newspaper, but I have not finished with journalism. What I want to say is perhaps best approached through a lengthy experience I had as lecturer in journalism at Auckland University College, from 1924 to 1935, for the university diploma in journalism. There had been a lectureship at Canterbury University College for some time: I was the first lecturer in Auckland. In 1956 the University Senate abolished the diploma, but asked the Academic Board to examine the possibility of incorporating Principles of Journalism and Practice of Journalism as a subject to Stage I for the B.A. degree. That journalism was one of the last professions or callings to acquire university status is not very surprising. It has never been recognized as a profession in the sense that the church or law or medicine is, or engineering or architecture. It is a calling or craft compounded of many factors. Some of the requirements of a good journalist may be acquired or developed in the ordinary course of university studies: English, for example, history and economics. In every successful journalist, however, there is an inborn instinct for news. This cannot be implanted by any teaching, though it can be developed.

In respect to every or nearly every profession or calling, there are roughly two schools of thought, the practical and the theoretical. The practical says the right way—and perhaps the only way—to learn a job is on the job. The theoretical contends that work in office or factory should be based on or supplemented by special training in school or university. These two schools argue and agree up to a point, or disagree. The trend has been to multiply and extend special or professional training. When I was young there was no law school in Auckland, and no school of architecture in the country. On the other hand, it is a fact that

academic training is only part of the business. The best way to master a profession is to practise it. No one would suggest that a medical student should not go to a medical school, but I have heard a middle-aged doctor say that a young fellow should be compelled to wait for six years after qualification before going into general practice on his own account. Presumably he would spend those six years in hospitals or in working privately under the direction of older men.

Probably there are still some journalists who think that teaching journalism in a university is a new-fangled and pretty useless frill. The only way to make a journalist of a man is to put him into a newspaper office and let him sink or swim. But why not teach him to swim? To go from metaphor to reality, it is well known that expert instruction makes a youngster swim much more efficiently and with much greater satisfaction than if he has picked up the knack anyhow. Some day he may have his own life or somebody else's to save in the water, and if he has been well taught he will bless his teacher. Any young fellow may spend a lot of time in a newspaper office picking up knowledge which he could learn quickly in a class, and there are some things he may never learn at all, or at any rate, completely. It would be interesting to know how many newspapers instruct their juniors regularly in the law of libel, the art of interviewing, or the principles of criticism, whether the subject is a play, a book or a football game. You *can* teach the principles of journalism, just as you can teach the principles of law. By taking a student through the making of a newspaper in all its stages, the lecture room can make his practical path a good deal easier.

To obtain the New Zealand Diploma of Journalism, a student had to pass in a number of general curriculum subjects, and the practice and principles of journalism. He had to show that he had done practical work, either on a newspaper or in class. I had to draft out my course of lectures with little to guide me. American text-books were some help, but American conditions differ from ours. My classes were mixed—some working journalists, some would-be journalists, and some who came for general interest. There were older men whose presence caused me some embarrassment: a couple of barristers who listened gravely to my lectures on the law of libel, and a Roman Catholic priest. As I made up my lectures I soon found there was a lot I had not known. There is nothing like having to teach a subject to make you learn it. Lord, what an ignorant cub I must have been when I was a reporter! I discovered two popular fallacies. One had to do with the

law of libel. I still have to argue with well-educated persons that in a civil action for libel—and any other kind is rare—the truth is the complete defence. The saying is still current that the greater the truth the greater the libel, but it is bad law. If you can prove that what is printed is true—all of it, mind you—you cannot be cast in damages in a civil action. The other fallacy is contained in the phrase “the freedom of the Press”. This is a concept unknown to British law, our own included. The freedom of the Press is simply the freedom of the individual citizen, expressed in a popular vehicle, the newspaper. Unless a government passes specific laws on the subject, the journalist has no more rights than any citizen who cares to break into print. If they break the laws governing the various kinds of libel, both are liable to the same penalties.

I took students through the business of getting out a paper. I lectured on the history of journalism and present-day tendencies; on the conflict between idealism and commercialism; on news-getting and interviewing; the principles of criticism; style in writing; advertising and circulation. I told my students that people were prepared to bow, more or less, to the special knowledge of other professions, but many of them seemed to think they could run a newspaper better than those who did. I was to find that the same was true of broadcasting. There is a type of reader, as there is of listener, who is always criticizing. I had a lawyer friend who would stop me in the street and say: “That was a silly thing you had in the paper the other night.” Never any mention of anything good in the paper. Perhaps if I had attacked him right away he would have thought me rude. “I see there’s another defaulting solicitor. Too bad. Too bad! Why don’t you lawyers raise the standard of your profession?” At any rate, I lacked the moral courage.

A journalist must also expect, I told my class, to have the lowest motives attributed to him, and must learn to take this philosophically. If he leaves something out, he is biased. If he puts something in he is also biased; or he is acting under direct sinister orders. Once when I was sub-editing cable news in the *Press*, which was strongly anti-prohibitionist, I left out a cable message about the liquor business. The omission was quite accidental, but the prohibitionists said we had done it on purpose. The editorial staff of a newspaper may confer long and anxiously and in complete honesty to decide what to say on a difficult question. Then some outsider says with complete assurance: “Of course we know what happened. The editor got his instructions from so-and-so.”

It has been alleged that as a matter of policy, newspapers in New Zealand manipulate reports so as to make them tell against Labour. I cannot speak for the whole of the Press, but I do know that I never gave such instructions, nor have I heard of them having been given.

My most amusing experience of this kind was with Social Credit. One afternoon the *Star* published in its first edition a lengthy report of Major Douglas's evidence before a currency committee in Wellington. I think it had been clipped from a Wellington paper to provide fill-up stuff. A first edition may be pulled about a good deal to make room in the main edition for what is considered more important news. This time the sub-editor pulled out Major Douglas's evidence. His judgment may have been faulty, but his action was quite honest. However, a woman called on me—it may have been the same afternoon—and told me she knew what had happened. As soon as the local manager of the Bank of New Zealand saw Douglas's evidence in the early edition, he came over and ordered it to be taken out. My word that this was not so had no effect on her at all. Her smiling certainty was more maddening than frowning vehemence. She *knew*.

I have said I am no mathematician, but some elementary instruction in handling statistics was not beyond me. I sketched some of the pitfalls. "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." Compare like things with like. Make the basis of your investigations as broad as possible. One country has more convictions for crime than another, but are the same offences classified as crimes in both? Be careful with taxation comparisons. This is a one-government country. In a federation there is State or provincial taxation as well as federal. Statistics are accounted dry, but they sometimes sprout with humour. I told the class a story of an argument about the effect of total abstinence in the tropics. He who was against abstinence cited the figures for a British regiment in India. In a certain year fifty per cent of its abstainers had died. It came out that there were two abstainers, and one was killed by a tiger.

All through my lectures I hammered away at responsibility—the vital moral compliance of that sense. A journalist acting maliciously was morally as bad as a person who robbed a blind man of his pennies. In the twenty years since I gave up lecturing, I have felt more and more deeply about this. Though I have never ceased to be a journalist, I have been able to take a more detached view of my profession. A sense of news and comment is the driving force in a journalist. A sense of responsibility keeps him on the

right course. If free countries have to curb their Press, it will be because the steering has become dangerously wild. A newspaper is much more than a purely commercial concern. It is an enterprise unofficially and tacitly licensed to print news and opinions. Significantly the synopsis of professional study for the New Zealand Diploma of Journalism, set forth in the *University Calendar*, began with these words: "Journalism as a *social service*; the modern newspaper, its *obligations*, rights and privileges."

In what is probably the best book written on the subject, that very distinguished journalist and publicist Wickham Steed says that the Press is "a sort of co-operative society in which the public is a partner". "The underlying principle that governs, or should govern, the Press is that the gathering and selling of news and views is essentially a public trust. It is based upon a tacit contract with the public that the news shall be true to the best of the knowledge and belief of those who offer it for sale, and that their comment on it shall be sincere according to their lights. The same kind of trust is implied in the relationship between a doctor and his patients . . ." Mr Steed goes on to consider the relative guilt of a dishonest doctor and a dishonest journalist. The number of people such a doctor can harm is narrowed by physical limitations. The journalist can poison the minds of hundreds of thousands or millions. Since ideas are the most potent things in the world, he who deliberately or without due forethought sells them, or news on which ideas are based, in false quality, is the most blameworthy of adulterators.

When the United States used the atom bomb against Japan there was the comment in the Swedish Press that here was a weapon to curb Russia. This struck me as extremely unwise, and I have wondered since whether it acted as a "starter" to Russian fears and so influenced subsequent Russian policy. At the Teheran conference during the war, when Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt met, an American correspondent reported that Stalin and one of his marshals had come to blows at the banquet. Whether the incident happened or not, to circulate such a story at such a time showed complete lack of responsibility. In denying it, Stalin stated that this particular marshal had *not* been present at the banquet. Was the offending correspondent disciplined in any way? Naturally the Russians cite a piece of journalism like this when the West condemns the official control of the Soviet Press and prides itself on the freedom of its own. A friend of mine travelling to England between the wars heard in the Atlantic from an

American radio station the "news" that the Princess Royal and her husband were about to be divorced. Happening to visit the district where the Earl and Countess of Harewood lived, he found there was not an atom of truth in the report. The neighbourhood described them as a devoted couple, and very popular. If ships' captains navigated on such irresponsible lines as these journalists the coasts of the world would be strewn with wrecks.

These examples happen to be taken from the foreign Press. I am very far from suggesting that the British and the Commonwealth Press are free from stain. Every journalist worth his salt knows what is wrong with the Press, just as every good doctor knows what is wrong with medicine. The basic difficulty is reconciling the commercial and the ideal. A newspaper must pay its way. If it is subsidized, it is exposed to the danger of being influenced by those who supply the money. British, American and Commonwealth newspapers are charged with being subservient to advertisers. This factor has been much exaggerated. At any rate it is better to be dependent on advertisement-revenue than on direct subsidy from an individual or party, as some Continental papers seem to be. Acceptance of an advertisement is a contract for business service which is rendered impersonally. The paper is simply the transmitter of a business offer, a transportable noticeboard. If now and then pressure is brought to bear on the paper by advertisers, the proprietor or the editor is free to resist it. If, however, the paper is subsidized by a person or party for political reasons, the contract is of a different kind. No such freedom is possible. Besides being a communication between seller and buyer to promote business, advertising is a subsidy, paid directly or indirectly by the public, that makes possible what it calls a free Press.

However, since a newspaper is a commercial undertaking as well as a social service, proprietors seek to make large profits. A private proprietorship may be just as mercenary as a public company, but it is free from the necessity of having to consider the interests of a large number of outside shareholders, many of whom may give little thought to the moral responsibilities of the concern from which they draw their dividends. Enlightened private ownership is the best form of control. If he has the will and the money, anybody can start a newspaper. He may seek to make money, to push a political creed, or to feed his ambition. He may be an idealist, or he may be utterly without conscience. Any scallywag can become a journalist. There is no filtering process save what is put into action by reputable editors and proprietors.

So it is open to anyone to seek to exercise, in Stanley Baldwin's words, applied by him to certain English newspaper proprietors: "The privilege of the harlot throughout the ages, power without responsibility."

There are professions that discipline their members. In New Zealand a lawyer's aggrieved client can put his case before the Law Society, which, if it finds the case proved, can take action against the offender. The Government and the British Medical Association have combined to deal with doctors who abuse their power under the Social Security system. Manifestly, it would be extremely difficult to deal in a similar way with a calling that is indeterminate, undergoes no prescribed training or tests, receives no statutory recognition, and in the nature of its business must be allowed a wide discretion. I am convinced, however, that something could and should be done to establish a more definite code of ethics in the Press, and that this move should come from the Press itself. The official British Commission on the Press came to this conclusion. So did the unofficial American Commission. The American investigators would like the Press to make and enforce a code of ethics, but think that probably this is impossible. They warn the Press that if it does not reform itself, the State may act. The Commissioners do not like the idea of State intervention, nor does any journalist. This warning should be heeded. One of these days the Press may find itself subject to a law requiring it to exercise "reasonable care". Or the State may make it an offence for a newspaper to publish certain kinds of statement without publishing at the same time counter-statements by the parties concerned, or giving those parties an immediate opportunity to present their case. Everybody who reads a newspaper knows how often there are two sides to a case, and that the first side sometimes gets a lengthy start. After the Empire Games in Auckland in 1950, a message from Sydney stated that the South Africans on their way home had refused to fraternize with the team from Ceylon. Weeks later a denial of this from the manager of the South African team was cabled from South Africa.

Some Labour leaders stand unequivocally for a free Press. Mr Peter Fraser, Labour Prime Minister in New Zealand for ten years, was one, and Lord Attlee, Labour Prime Minister in Britain, is another. Labour parties have socialistic aims. Complete socialism would include the Press. How would the Press be conducted in such a regime? I can see three ways: a journalists' guild; a public utility corporation like the B.B.C.; or a government department. Can it be believed that under any one of these arrangements the

Press would be as free as it is today? There would be no competition. The measure of freedom enjoyed would depend ultimately on the Government. The temptation to stifle criticism of the Government would be powerful and constant. My preference would be for a public corporation. The worst kind of controlling body would be a government department. If there is one thing more than another that a government is *not* fit to manage, it is a newspaper.

Meanwhile the New Zealand Press might set an example in organized self-discipline. I have referred to the exceptional opportunities existing in New Zealand for experiments in industrial control, and our failure to seize them. There are similar opportunities in the connection between Press and public. We are a small, isolated, homogeneous, and compact community. Our newspapers are exceptionally uniform in methods and standards. They have hardly been touched by the irresponsible sensationalism that is so marked a feature of journalism in some other countries. Their general standard of news evaluation and taste is much above that of Britain. Their code of fairness and decency is high. The average style is good, and some of the writing has distinction. I should like to see more enterprise in news-getting, more courage, more specialization, and more joint action to raise standards all round. The ultimate responsibility for the standing of the Press rests, *not* with editors, but with proprietors. Newspaper proprietors in New Zealand enjoy a profitable monopoly into which it is very difficult to break, and are organized in an association which covers the whole country. From all these considerations it follows that New Zealand proprietors are in a particularly good position to take joint action to raise and maintain the standing of the Press. Acting with the Journalists' Association, they could frame, and do their best to enforce, a code of ethics and good professional practice such as is already observed by experienced and reputable journalists. They could set up a public relations committee to which a citizen who failed to get what he regarded as satisfaction from a newspaper could state a case. I am well aware it might be difficult to impose a penalty on an offending paper, but the very existence of such an appeal body would have a steady effect on the newspaper world, and would prove to the public that newspapers had a sense of obligation. Then if legislation to curb the power of the Press were introduced, newspapers would be surer of public backing for their opposition to it. Without such backing, their defence might not prevail.

## *Chapter Sixteen*

### JOURNALIST INTO BROADCASTER

*Newspaper Work and Radio—News Sense, Plus Voice—No Reading Back—Broadcasting Set-up in the Thirties—From Board to Government Department—John Reith's Advice—Sir James Shelley as Director—Public Ignorance and Hostility—How it was Lessened—The Touchy Listener—The Critic Who Had No Set—Marvel of Recording—Elocution Teacher's Audition—A Link with Napoleon—Lesson from the Civil Service: Criticism without Facts—Farewell to Nine O'clock—Life at the Bay—A Long Look Round.*

**I**N 1935, AT THE AGE OF FIFTY-FOUR, I went from journalism to broadcasting. I did so partly in a spirit of adventure. Usually, when a man has reached his fifties, he has got beyond wishing to change his calling, and if he has not, he knows there are not many openings for a beginner. I realized that such a chance as the Broadcasting Board offered me, the position of Supervisor of Talks for the Dominion, was not likely to come again, so that if I wanted to throw my hat into the ring against fortune, I had better accept. I had always been anxious and timorous in my own affairs; now, with my family grown up and less domestic responsibility on my shoulders, I was disposed to take the risk that was involved. I was safe on the *Star*, with a benefit fund at my back. If I fell ill they would treat me generously. In my new job I could be dismissed at a month's notice, and a lawyer friend kindly informed me (after I had changed over) that by a recent decision I could not claim anything more. There was then no superannuation in the Broadcasting Service.

I knew very little about broadcasting. For some months I had talked on world affairs from the main Auckland station, 1YA. I remember the first talk most vividly. The occasion made me nervous, and I had to watch my difficulty in speaking, which was apt to recur in a crisis. As I waited at the microphone for the signal, I was seized by an extraordinary tension. My muscles seemed to be screwed up, and my pulse to be beating at about a hundred and twenty. This lasted for the first minute or so of the broadcast. Then I suddenly felt it was going well, and I relaxed

and was able to enjoy myself. These talks were a good preparation for the work of supervising talks. From personal experience I could sympathize with the nervous speaker. There are men who would rather fight a battle than make a speech. One man I put on the air had had a distinguished career in the Colonial Service. At times he had interposed between warring tribes and told them to behave themselves. At the microphone, however, he was in a sweat with nervousness.

When I joined the Broadcasting Service I had no radio set in my home. I believed, however, that the side of broadcasting I was joining, would not be very different from journalism. The same news values would apply. Just as people would not read a paper if it did not interest them, so they would not listen to a radio talk. So it turned out. Broadcasting was like newspaper work, but there were important differences. In broadcasting there was the human voice. The newspaper reader could read back, but the listener could not listen back. It was slightly easier to turn to something else in the newspaper than to get another station on the air, especially if this was accompanied by a look at the programmes, hence dissatisfied listeners were often tempted to switch the whole thing off—like throwing a newspaper across the room.

Let me express the vital importance of the voice in this way.

Suppose you were compelled to have newspapers and books read to you every day, would you not consider the tone of voice and the intelligence of the reader very important? Would you not be irritated by an ugly voice and bad phrasing? Radio talks, stories and plays, may be likened to a newspaper, a magazine, or a book read aloud. If a broadcasting service were to broadcast the whole of a newspaper, it would try to read it pleasantly and intelligently from front page to last, advertisements and all. The reading of the commercial column should be as efficient in its own way as that of the editorials or the notice of last night's play. Now if you had someone reading to you, you might interrupt occasionally with: "What's that? I didn't get it. What did you say?" Or, "What does that mean?" You would not have the print before you to read back, but you could ask your reader to do this for you. Listening to radio, however, you cannot ask the speaker to read back. The word or sentence is irrecoverable.

This difference is always in the minds of those who supervise radio speech of all kinds. The script should be written and read so that the listener can follow it without questioning. Sentences in talks should be simple. A tangle of clauses will not do. Certain words do not go well over the air and should be avoided. This

means that writing for broadcasting has a technique of its own. Accuracy is even more important than in print. The moral obligation is the same, but the radio-winged word can travel with the speed of light to the ends of the earth, and it is much more difficult to correct a mistake than it is in a newspaper. The two cardinal sins are the same in journalism and broadcasting—inaccuracy and dullness. In journalism there are two opportunities for dullness, subject and style of writing. In broadcasting there are three, subject, composition and delivery. A bad delivery can spoil the best script.

So I went to Wellington and started to learn the business of broadcasting. My employer was a board of seven members (originally three) appointed on the B.B.C. model by the Government, which had been impressed by the B.B.C.'s degree of independence. The Government advanced the Board the money to buy the assets of the Broadcasting Company, but the incorporating Act forbade the Board to borrow money save with the Government's consent. The Board followed the policy of financing capital development out of listeners' fees. This arrangement had the advantage of providing the country with a broadcasting system unencumbered by debt. The advantage was made all the greater by the possibility that in this new service equipment might quickly become obsolescent. As a matter of fact the Board at once set about improving the stations taken over from the Company. There was the disadvantage that in the early years revenue was small, and programme needs had to be balanced against those of capital. The Board began in 1932 with only seventy thousand listeners. By the time I joined, in 1935, the number had doubled. As the total leaped up and up a very large reserve was accumulated for extensions. For some time, however, there was justification for the criticism that the Board was under-feeding the programme side. The head office staff was ridiculously small. I was the first whole-time officer responsible for talks. My job was to keep an eye on all main stations from Auckland to Invercargill. Working with the station staffs, I planned many of the talks, single or in series, found and instructed speakers, and wrote scripts. For some years I worked without an assistant. It was not until about the middle of the war that I had one, and then he was called for service. For some time before I retired in 1946 I had this assistant and one other. It must be said for the Service that the war created difficulties in providing me with help, and I may add that when I did get a staff it was particularly efficient.

When I joined, salaries were deplorably low. The General

Manager, the late Mr E. C. Hands, was getting over £1000 a year, and deserved it. When the Board took over from the Company he was persuaded to come to it from the Post Office, and in doing so sacrificed his good prospects of promotion and his superannuation. The next senior administrative officer, however, was paid about £500. At £650 I was the most highly paid officer on the programme side. This had been my salary when I left the *Star*, cut down in the depression from about £730. Though I thought my broadcasting salary too small I had no grievance. Though I was new to the business I was being paid more than the administrative officer next to the general manager. On the head office staff there were experts in their particular lines, men whom it would have been very difficult to replace, who were being paid less than £500. I was shocked when I discovered this, and hastened to make my opinion clear to my colleagues, who, I sensed, were somewhat aggrieved at the disparity between my salary and theirs. I told them I would not have joined the Service for less.

The Chairman of the Board, the late Mr H. D. Vickery, was an able man and a gentleman, but he was an accountant, and I suspect the Board looked at salaries through accountancy glasses. There was too strong a disposition to keep running costs low. The consequence was that when the new Labour Government turned broadcasting into a Civil Service department in 1936 it took over a low salary scale, and this affected future standards. Had the Board paid higher salaries, these would have stood. I finished in 1946 with a salary of £800. As Civil Service rates went, this was a good salary, but the position I filled was at least as important as that of a metropolitan editor (in my opinion more important since it was national in scope), and I should say there were quite a number of editors and editorial assistants receiving more than £800. However, Civil Service salaries in general tend to be below private rates. Since I left the Broadcasting Service the level of salaries has continued to rise.

By becoming civil servants the staff obtained three benefits. They were more secure in their posts (a Civil Service job is perhaps safer than any other); they were eligible for transfer to other departments of the Civil Service; and they were admitted at once to the Public Service Superannuation Fund. What would have been the advantages if the Board had been sustained in office? That would have depended on the Board's policy. Had the Board bid high for the best brains among men and women, salaries would have been higher than in the Civil Service. If the Board had used its independence boldly in the framing of programmes, the staff

would have enjoyed a degree of freedom in planning and execution which I should say is not possible in a department under any government. These, however, are big "ifs". On principle, and having regard to the whole good of broadcasting as a national utility, I have a strong preference for independent corporation control on B.B.C. lines, as against ministerial control. I must acknowledge, however, the difficulty of obtaining in New Zealand a body comparable to the governors of the B.B.C., and of investing it with the B.B.C.'s measure of independence. Britain has so many highly capable and disinterested men and women suitable for such positions. New Zealand is now attempting to do everything that Britain does, with only a small fraction of Britain's population from which to draw persons of outstanding ability for important posts. For example, we have created a diplomatic service, and we send delegates to the United Nations, U.N.E.S.C.O., and other international organizations. In any society the pool of exceptional ability joined with character is smaller than many realize. Moreover, Britain shows a stronger disposition than we do to keep political considerations out of selections. More fundamental still to this problem of broadcasting control, there is in Britain a greater regard for freedom of expression. The B.B.C. is what it is, largely because successive governments have preferred that broadcasts shall be managed by this method rather than any other, and have supported the Corporation's policy of combined freedom and impartiality.

After I had written the above comment I came upon this reference to the New Zealand Service in Lord Reith's autobiography *Into the Wind*. Lord Reith was then head of the B.B.C.:

New Zealand had recently decided on State management as well as State ownership of broadcasting. The Prime Minister of that country asked me what I thought about it. A mistake—against the interests of both broadcasting and Government. He said one of the reasons for their decision was the difficulty they had in getting people of the right type to make up the Board. The man whom they had appointed as chief executive would have a good deal of freedom. I said he would find it difficult to get people to believe that he was not acting under direct governmental orders.

The man referred to, the first Director of Broadcasting, was Professor (now Sir) James Shelley, an Englishman who had been Professor of Education at Canterbury University College for sixteen years. James Shelley was an idealist and a crusader, with a great capacity for work. He brought to broadcasting a burning enthusiasm and a knowledge of certain of the arts that probably

was not equalled in this country. He had also been trained in science. In his temperament were certain qualities that handicapped him as Director. He was, for example, not very methodical. Even his virtues plagued him; he was too sensitive and too kind. Moreover, only three years of his term of thirteen years were normal. James Shelley, however, gave distinguished and important service to broadcasting. Coverage was increased and programmes widened in scope and improved in quality. His most conspicuous monument is the National Symphony Orchestra, which was his idea and creation. It is part of the Broadcasting Service. He also wanted a Conservatorium of Music, and but for the war we should probably have it now. Quite apart from broadcasting, James Shelley's influence was wide and deep. Perhaps no man in our history has done so much in the diffusion of culture. I am proud to have won and retained his close and warm friendship.

The early development of broadcasting in New Zealand is a story of bits and pieces, unco-ordinated effort by enthusiastic pioneers, and governments pressed by interested parties and not knowing quite what to do. When I joined there were a number of private stations in addition to the Board's. Eventually all, or nearly all, these private stations were taken over by the State, and some of them formed into the Commercial (that is, advertising) Service, which later became the Commercial Division of the New Zealand Broadcasting Service. There was strong rivalry between the Board's A stations, and the B stations, which were the more popular. The trouble was that a vastly important public utility of quite a new kind was being developed, and ignorance and self-interest complicated the task of steering it. Governments and Members of Parliament were little if at all better informed about it than the public. A Member of Parliament is reported to have asked what the Director of Broadcasting did except put on a few recordings. Newspapers shared in the general ignorance (I have confessed my own), and were not disposed to be friendly towards what they regarded as a rival.

The Service did little to make this "bad Press" better. There should have been a Public Relations Officer from the start. When at my first meeting with the Chairman I mentioned publicity, he told me he was not going to emulate Mr X . . . ., a well-known public servant who had the reputation of being anything but a shrinking violet. The Chairman was confusing personal advertising with the publicity that was the Service's due. A dramatized version of *The Mutiny of the Bounty*, produced in the Board's studios, caused some stir. Dropping in to see the manager, a well-

known journalist praised the feature and mentioned the cries of the sea-gulls. "Those were Wellington sea-gulls," said Mr Hands. "What's that?" asked the surprised interviewer. "Yes, Wellington sea-gulls. We took recordings of them on the wharf here." The story the journalist wrote about this was one of the first pieces of publicity the daily Press gave to our work behind the scenes. There was dissatisfaction, as there always has been, about choice of programmes. Unfortunately New Zealand, being so largely up on end, is a bad country for radio to cover. The B.B.C.'s coverage problem was much simpler. We had no radio journal of our own till 1937. The result was that when our fate was decided after Labour's victory in 1935 we had few friends. As time went on, however, we won them. The quality and variety of the programmes, including the daily services such as news and weather and the broadcasting of events and contests, gradually engendered appreciation in the public mind. Largely as a result of the establishment of the *New Zealand Listener*, publicity greatly improved. The *Listener* is a first-class critical journal and a keen encourager of new writing talent.

The second war created special bonds between the Service and the listeners. Every day the people heard news and commentaries, in which we worked closely with the B.B.C. The special victory programme, from London after the defeat of Germany, which we relayed, recorded and re-broadcast, was the B.B.C.'s very finest effort. We had sat up all night "bringing in the world" to our system, and then about six in the morning came this profoundly moving salute to all who had wrought the victory. Our most personal intimate service, however, was to the families and friends of New Zealand soldiers, sailors and airmen. Our special recording units followed the fortunes of these men and women, and transmitted individual messages from many thousands of them. The voice of Jack and Bill and Mary, serving in North Africa, England or a Pacific Island, or at sea, came into their New Zealand homes.

All this, of course, does not dispose of the special difficulties of pleasing the radio public. Every journalist knows he cannot please all the people all the time. His own striving for perfection in serving an army of customers of every opinion and taste may be marred by errors in omission and commission. If he is sensible he realizes his own shortcomings and those of his paper. The broadcaster is in the same position, but his audience is more critical, more touchy, and liable to express itself with more acerbity. The voice of the newspaper speaking in cold print is

impersonal. The radio voice is alive; it speaks with all the variations that please or annoy. Some listeners regard their particular preferences as all important, and think they have a grievance when they can not get them just when they want them. This type came into prominence in 1950, when it was learned that the National Symphony Orchestra had cost £100,000 in a year, far more than it earned. The deficit was met from the Broadcasting Service's licence revenue. A newspaper correspondent asked why he and others should pay for what they did not want. The answer is that every listener pays for what he does not want. There is not one class of news, instruction or entertainment, that interests every payer of the licence fee. There is also the citizen who criticizes the Service without studying the programmes, which are supplied to him by the sixpenny weekly *Listener*. Happily, as a result of years of education, the type is not so numerous as it was. Shortly after I joined, the weekly radio column of a newspaper congratulated the local station on having broadcast at last one of a series of classical pieces on a Sunday afternoon. On preceding Sunday afternoons that station had broadcast a dozen similar items. Perhaps the most extraordinary case was that of a man high up in the musical world who was one of our most vehement critics. For a time he did not possess a radio set.

Among listeners, as among newspaper readers, the dissatisfied are disposed to express themselves more than the satisfied, for which reason the numbers of dissatisfied loom disproportionately large. Like screen actors, broadcasters play to an unseen audience. There is no test of applause. In radio there is no test of box-office. This makes one of the programme organizer's problems; how is he going to gauge the reception of what he presents? A broadcasting service receives many letters of appreciation, and it values them. I can assure listeners that praise is sweet to the performer and to the officer who has put him on the air. Besides, it is a guide to future action. So if you feel disposed to write an appreciative letter by all means do so.

One thing I learned is that you cannot divide listeners—or any other great body of people—into sheep and goats. Tastes are mixed, and one never knows where a particular liking will crop out. The intellectual may wish to divert himself with thrillers or low comedy, and the apparently non-intellectual may show a surprising interest in good books or music. One couple whose interests ranged from Bach to Einstein never missed the "Japanese House-boy" series. If there is a high-brow play (I do not like the term), it is Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard*. As I was going in to a

W.E.A. performance of *The Cherry Orchard* in Auckland I overheard a conversation between a citizen and the box-office. They were sorry there was no room that evening, but they could give a seat on Monday. No, he could not come on Monday, because he was going to wrestling in the Town Hall. Chekov and wrestling; that incident taught me a lot.

Part of the job's fascination was the study of the voice for broadcasting. I should say our average quality of speech is higher than Britain's, but with fifty million people to draw upon, the B.B.C. can obtain good speakers much more easily than the N.Z.B.S., and that applies to all kinds of radio entertainment. There is a large body of men and women in Britain who speak clearly and pleasantly, with an easy rhythm. I arranged talks by many distinguished visitors from the Old Country, including Lord Reith, and almost without exception they broadcast well. They belonged to a society where good speech was respected and appreciated; they lived with it daily. Please do not think I rule out dialect, plump for the Oxford accent, or consider that the B.B.C. voice is perfect. I do not. My admiration for J. B. Priestley as a broadcaster is sufficient answer. We recorded a talk by a New Zealander who had distinguished himself at Cambridge (which, I presume, in respect to speech may be regarded as Oxford's twin), but the way in which he spoke his excellent matter sounded so much like a parody of a stage curate that we simply could not use the recording. Any variation from Standard English is acceptable if the voice is clear and fluent and has intelligence behind it. Our main trouble in New Zealand is that we do not appreciate the aesthetics of speech. We are liable to regard refined speech as affectation—the mark of a "Cissy". Too often our voices are thick, ugly and flat, lacking in tone and rhythm. Teachers do not set a good example. About the worst talk I ever put on was by one of them. Among the well educated, scientists as a class are perhaps the least satisfactory at the microphone. In New Zealand radio talking there is sometimes a faint flavour of the far-off days of the primers: "The-fat-cat-sat-on-the-mat."

Then there was the recording of talks. That the voice should carry through the air across the world seems to me not more wonderful than that a shallow track on a disc should reproduce that voice faithfully, and also all the varieties of tone in an orchestra. It was part of the interest of recording to watch the surprise of people on hearing their own voice for the first time. Like the American who saw a giraffe, and said, "There's no such animal", some of them did not believe the voice to be theirs. Except in

this way, a person never hears his own voice properly. I was astonished when I heard mine. This gives me the opportunity of mentioning the most memorable link with the past that has come to my knowledge. In 1937 Miss Caroline Nias visited New Zealand. She was the daughter (yes, the daughter, not the granddaughter) of the Captain Nias who in 1840 brought Captain Hobson in H.M.S. *Herald* to the Bay of Islands to arrange the annexation of New Zealand. As a midshipman Nias had been in charge of one of the boats that patrolled around the *Bellerophon* in Plymouth Sound when Napoleon was on board. Captain Nias was present at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, and in other places witnessed Maori signatures. When he brought the *Herald* into Wellington harbour she was the first warship to enter, and he sailed her out against a southerly one evening, with boats' crews holding lights to take him past Barretts Reef. Nearly a hundred years later his daughter, in sprightly middle age, flew over Cook Strait from Blenheim to Wellington. We recorded a talk by Miss Nias on her father's career (he rose to be admiral and his portrait is in the National Portrait Gallery), and "played" it over to her. "What do you think of your voice, Miss Nias?" "Perfectly beastly!" However, she must have appreciated the extraordinary nature of the occasion. A daughter of the man who guarded Napoleon in 1815, and saw the Treaty of Waitangi signed in 1840, was recording a talk in New Zealand in 1937.

The value of recording in showing speakers their faults is inestimable, and it is astonishing that public men, clergy, teachers, and indeed all who have to address assemblies, do not make more use of the invention. Of all churches, perhaps the Anglican has the most need of it. I have heard its magnificent ritual read as if it were a market report. An Anglican clergyman who was a particularly good speaker said to me that if he was made a bishop the first thing he would do would be to instruct all his clergy to have their voices tested in this way. What a voice test in the broadcasting studios can do is well illustrated by the experience of a woman (English, I think) who asked me if she could give some talks. In trying her out I co-opted a colleague who knew much more about the voice and its use than I did. He put her through one of the usual reading tests, and gave her a criticism. "That's curious," she commented, quite cheerfully, "you're mentioning all the faults I find in my elocution pupils!" "All right," he said, "we'll let you hear what you're like." So we recorded a short passage of reading, and she sat down to listen to herself. "Now, Miss X . . .," said my colleague, "if you were a listener

and heard that, wouldn't you want to turn it off?" "I would," she replied. She was a good sport. Elocutionists as a class are not welcome in broadcasting studios. They have a good deal to unlearn.

The change-over from journalist to broadcaster brought me one of the most illuminating experiences of my life. From being a critic, I became a servant of a public service that was criticized perhaps more than any other. A thrower of sticks at Aunt Sally took Aunt Sally's place. Like my colleagues, I was conscious of the shortcomings of the Service, but, knowing the inside running, I saw that many criticisms were based on ignorance. Some of them need not have been put on paper. A simple inquiry, even so simple as studying the programmes, would have given complainants the facts. For example, a newspaper published a letter asking why a regular commentator on world affairs was off the air, and suggesting he had been censored. The truth was that the commentator was on holiday and a substitute was engaged. This could have been ascertained by inquiry from the Broadcasting Service, but no one took that trouble. There is no reason to believe that broadcasting is alone in this respect. Every public institution and public man, every private individual, is subject to criticism that is ignorant, or unthinking, or both.

The longer I live, the more astounded I am that people jump so quickly to conclusions. They see a fact, or what looks like a fact, and at once weave a theory round it. They do not take the trouble to find out if it is true, or if there are other facts. A story about the Rev. Rutherford Waddell, of Dunedin, sticks in my mind as a danger signal. Waddell was one of the most distinguished figures of the Presbyterian Church in the Presbyterian settlement of Otago. He lives in New Zealand history for his fearless exposure of the sweating evil in the days before the labour legislation of the nineties, and was a man of saintly life. One day two men passed him on the golf links. "Good morning," said one of them. No reply from Waddell. "What bad manners that man has!" The simple explanation was that Waddell was very deaf.

Every week there are complaints and charges in the newspapers that are refuted or modified by counter-statements. All of us believe some of them. "By Jove, that's red-hot, isn't it?" one says, and then our indignation is cooled when we read that there is quite another side to the question. A lot of trouble and newspaper space, and damage to reputations, would be saved if critics would take a look at that other side before rushing into print or writing

letters to departments or spreading stories by word of mouth. They might consult the *Year Book*, or ring up, say, the Town Clerk, or sit down and think quietly for a few minutes. I believe if this were done at least half the stories would be killed at birth. The number of unverified stories, some of them scandalous, passed round by word of mouth, is countless. Higher education is no bar; there are university graduates who will swallow a lot. Some of our public men have suffered cruelly from circulation of slander. You may say that when I was a journalist I must have offended by a too quick reception of one side of a case. I am sure I did, but one is never too old to learn.

All this time I was in Wellington, and I have lived there since I retired. This choice surprises some of my Auckland friends. If it does, I would suggest that they really do not know Wellington. So many New Zealanders do not. They know only Lambton Quay and Thorndon as places for doing a day or two's business, or as a stop between north and south. There, over the years, you may meet many of your friends from various parts of the country. The real Wellington is all the territory that Colonel Wakefield bought from the Maoris in 1839 on the deck of the *Tory*, the whole visible landscape of hills and valleys and beyond, for a miscellaneous collection of goods that included blankets, soap, guns and ammunition, axes, pipes and tobacco, fish-hooks, looking-glasses, umbrellas, ribbon, sealing wax, and jew's harps, but also land reserves for the Maori. It is this widespread landscape and seascapes that is the full and real Wellington, the Wellington of the lake-blue harbour and streets storming its steep ring of hills. To love her is an exciting education. Excitement is in the atmosphere of the place, the air that makes you run up steps, the northerly wind that spins you round in the middle of a street and leaves you in horrid doubt whether you will ever get to the other side. It is in panoramas of bold and flashing beauty. Seen in detail, Wellington can look very drab. The Thorndon Quay road approach to the city is deeply dismal. Seen, however, as a composition of hills and sea, with the city flowing over the hills, Wellington merits the praise of a Governor-General of New Zealand: "The most beautiful city of the Empire." When the cold rain-charged southerly blows itself out it leaves days of unutterable loveliness. The enclosed harbour is a smooth floor of blue, and the surrounding hills challenge it with every colour. As the day closes the shadows pour into the golden valleys like dark wine, and should a mist come down to hide the city lights

an onlooker from the eastern bays might imagine he was by the shore of one of Otago's mountain lakes.

Wellington is also exciting in its contacts. There you may meet everybody. The city draws talent from all over New Zealand. In Wellington are the centres of the political and commercial machines. Heads of departments and of national firms, experts of various kinds, live there. Others drop in from here and there on business. It is the intellectual centre of New Zealand. Most of New Zealand's distinguished visitors from abroad come to Wellington. It is largely a city of people from other places. Once in a cafeteria restaurant the old argument about Auckland and Wellington came up. "Hold on," I said, "how many of us here belong to Wellington?" There were eighteen in the party—a mixed bunch—and not one was Wellington born and bred. If there is less civic pride in Wellington than elsewhere, this may be a reason. On the other hand, I find Wellington the least parochial of New Zealand cities. So many men in Wellington have to study affairs from a national point of view. They are concerned with what happens in Auckland, Taihape, Westport and Gore, and how it will affect Tauranga, Napier, Wanganui, Nelson and Christchurch.

So Wellington was another stage in my education—the fascination of the city and the national nature of my job. I had to study local requirements and tastes, which varied from district to district. An item might be more interesting in Dunedin than Auckland. I visited the other main centres, met people, and arranged some of the talks on local history. All this set me thinking more about the variety of landscape and people, of social and economic history, in New Zealand. Busy though I was, I found time to write some books. The Centennial history of Wellington city and province, *The City of the Strait*, was the toughest job I have ever done. There were eighteen months to do the research and write the book. If Wellington had not been so good a place to work in the task would have been even harder. I had some knowledge of general New Zealand history, but little of Wellington's story. It was well worth doing, especially as in a measure the foundation of Wellington was the foundation of New Zealand. In this book I tried to make some return for Wellington's capture of my affections.

This capture, however, would not have been so complete had I continued to live in the city proper. Looking for a permanent home at the end of 1937, we were most fortunate in being able to buy a property at York Bay, opposite the city and on the road

to Eastbourne. These eastern bays are a part of Wellington that the visitor seldom explores. The property I was offered had every advantage. It was as large as I could conveniently manage; the section was flat and had been planted with native and English trees, including a magnificent oak; it was only a step to the water-front bus that took one into town in half an hour or less; and the windows commanded close and distant views of the harbour and its sweep of hills from near Petone, through the city, to Seatoun at the Heads. Only a few minutes' walk away, on the steep hills at the back of York Bay, was some of the original bush, the kind that clothed all these hills when the first settlers came in 1840. A clear creek dropped down under the beeches and tree-ferns. It was Christmas week when we moved in, and on the first morning I looked out on a scene that reminded me of Auckland province—a blue sunlit sea a hundred yards away, and the red blossoms of the pohutukawa, which, imported from the north, blooms here in equal glory. We were strangers to the Bay, but soon found this counted for nothing. According to custom, everybody in the Bay was invited to a New Year's Eve party at one of the larger houses, and we were made to feel thoroughly at home. There was some pleasant topical fooling; everybody met everybody else; and after supper the company trooped down to the beach at midnight, lit a bonfire, and, making a circle on the road, sang "Auld Lang Syne". This old-and-new-year revelry of Bay residents has been kept up through the years.

When the advance guard of the settlers came to Wellington in 1839 they noted the abundance of bird-life about the harbour, but forty years later Charles Heaphy, one of that party, said bell-birds and riro-riros were seldom seen or had disappeared. Though I was country-reared and visited the bush from time to time in later years, I did not hear a bell-bird till I was over forty, or see one till I came to live at York Bay. The birds that Heaphy mentioned and others have long been plentiful in Wellington's eastern bays. Bell-birds sing in my garden and round about. Tuis are plentiful. The beautiful languorous native pigeon, which I do not think I saw half a dozen times before I settled in York Bay, lives here in security and can be studied at close quarters. This is a rich bird-sanctuary. Sea-gulls are an unending source of interest. All day they march about the beach, make short flights, dive for food, and drop mussels on the bitumen road to break the shells. Now and then they take the high air and weave patterns above the nesting-ground of their land sisters and the acres of golden gorse.

It is an easy-going unconventional community. Everybody knows everybody else. If you wish to be social, there are opportunities; if you prefer to stay at home, your preference is respected. That there are few gates to properties is partly due to the fact that we have neither horse nor cow in the settlement, but it is also a sign of neighbourliness. We love beach-combing. I have seen most of the Bay on the beach, filling cars, trolleys, wheelbarrows and perambulators from a flood-borne harvest of driftwood. At times our life has faintly recalled *Cranford*, but what would that community of lavender and old lace have made of our wood-getting? An elegant visitor was shocked to see a woman packing sticks into a handcart. "My dear, I didn't know there was such poverty. Can anything be done about it?" The wood-gatherer was her host's niece. With its homes and gardens, bush and sea, its English and alien birds, and inhabitants born in New Zealand or Britain, the Bay is like all New Zealand, a blend of two worlds. Oak and ash and birch and sycamore grow beside the kowhai, ngaio and houhere. Daffodils come up in the grass. Roses bloom in winter. Tea-tree bushes remind us that if this flower were not so common (it covers miles and miles in many places in New Zealand) it would be more highly praised. The gorse that clothes some of our once forest-clad slopes is an imported pest, and the fire-risk that it brings is a constant anxiety in summer, but the Field of the Cloth of Gold that it spreads out is gorgeous. Away to the south-west the snow peak of Tapuaenuku, 9465 feet, the highest point in the Kaikouras, rises above the Seatoun hills, a reminder that the South Island—or the Mainland, as some of its inhabitants like to call it—is not far away.

One spring day in 1946 I took leave of broadcasting and of full-time work. I had passed the allotted span of the Civil Service and felt that after many years of work, in which I had seldom had a week-end completely free, I needed some leisure. With one possible exception, I was the oldest person at the farewell gathering. I knew them all; had worked with many of them; had had few serious differences; and had never been through a real row. The years of broadcasting had been difficult and in some respects disappointing. The war had put a severe brake on hopes of development, and the shadow of personal loss, actual and possible, had hung over all. The idealism in the Service, however, the feeling that one was helping to direct and extend something big and worth while, and the comradeship of one's fellows, did much to lighten the heart and strengthen the will. After the leave-taking ceremony, there was a talk in the Director's room. I was to con-

tinue to make full use of the office, and would I do a series of broadcasts on my literary work? That work would hardly carry the weight of a series, I replied, but I had in mind *The Making of a New Zealander*. A tentative agreement about talks was made. So I walked out sad but happy. I had come to the top of the pass in my life, but the air was bright with kindness, and I was invited to go on with my work.

There followed the best holiday my wife and I have ever had, with the exception of our trip to England. The Civil Service has a pleasant system of retirement leave on salary, and for me this worked out at four months. We took our car to the South Island and in it covered some fifteen hundred miles at our leisure. Except doubt about weak tyres, which would be difficult to replace, and the necessity for keeping up my weekly article for the *Auckland Star*, which I had written for years without a break, we had no worries. Our younger son had now returned to the Bay. He had helped us to find York Bay, but soon afterwards went to England and served throughout the war as a radio, and later radar officer, in the Merchant Navy.

It was late spring, the full sweet of the year, when the English trees in which the South Island abounds, were at their loveliest—especially the tall Lombardy poplars, like green torches—and pasture was almost vocal in its richness. Our route was Picton to Christchurch by the Kaikoura alpine coast, and then to Timaru. From South Canterbury we drove to the Mackenzie country, planning to go from there through the centre of the island to Queenstown, but a burst tyre and a snow-storm sent us back on our tracks. To Dunedin and Queenstown we went by bus and train, then north over the Crown Range by service car to Omarama, Timaru and (now in our car again) to Christchurch. After that, Hanmer, the Lewis Pass, the Buller Gorge, Nelson and back to Picton, to take the ferry home. Save for an appointment at Queenstown, we were not tied to time. We took it easily, with a short daily run; stopped where we wished to look at scenery; picnicked by road and river. There is no better way of seeing the country, unless it is by walking, but in the kind of life we lead now, that is for eternity rather than time. There was a delicious feeling of leisure, such as we had not known for years.

One abiding memory is of deep and high southern tussock land, which, sloping up to rock and snow, stretches from Otago to Marlborough. Blue Cliffs in South Canterbury gave us an experience of a South Island station. Our host and hostess, Dr and Mrs Woodhouse, were interested in everything: the land, people,

literature, all that concerned New Zealand life. Their own service to these things has been unstinted, and we learned much while enjoying the warmth of their hospitality. Blue Cliffs is part down land and part foothills. We went some distance into the higher country, and could see some of the erosion problems to which Dr Woodhouse has devoted years of study and direction.

At Lake Wakatipu we were for some days at Walter Peak station, opposite Queenstown, with the John Mackenzies. Here the waters of the lake lapped lawns in front of the homestead, and from the garden and orchard at the back Walter Peak rose steeply 6000 feet to its snow. Walter Peak and Mt Nicholas stations, which were worked as one, comprised about 170,000 acres of mountain and lake-side flats. We drove eleven of the thirteen miles to the southern boundary on a track road, and made tea by the Von River, which that day was too formidable an obstacle to completing our journey. Here, in that enchanting but awesome country, was much that was strange to the northerner, something to be studied—so different, but New Zealand. Paradise, at the head of the lake, lived up to its name.

So we moved, and stayed, and moved on, from place to place, looking and absorbing, trying to get the feel of the land in all its variations, extending our education as New Zealanders. Then home, with full hearts and minds, to take up work again. Mine I could do in my own time. It was no longer necessary to rush for an early bus.

## *Chapter Seventeen*

### THIS NEW ZEALAND

*Variety of Our Land—Mangroves and Mud-flats to Alps—People Make a Country—The New Zealand Type—Admixture of Maori—Achievements of a Century—The New Zealander at War—Upham's Double V.C.—Churchill's "Ball of Fire"—A Canadian Tribute—"Clean and Lovely Land of the Faithful"—New Duties for New Times—The Liberal Mind.*

**I**S IT POSSIBLE TO GATHER UP THREADS and make something of a pattern? I know most of New Zealand, and may it be my fortune to fill in all the gaps. True, an Englishman who has never left his native town may be a typical Englishman—if there is such a person—but travel should distil a certain amount of wisdom. It shows a man the variety of his country. The people of Britain are more varied than we are, because their roots are so much deeper and older and were struck from a number of sources when communities were more isolated. However, the variety of New Zealand landscape and industries and social aspects is sufficient to affect national life and warrant study. If an Aucklander doubts this, let him make such a journey as I have made twice through Otago and Canterbury high country. I did this the first time in the nineteen-thirties, from Queenstown through the Lindis Pass to the Mackenzie country and on to Timaru. The landscape and what it contained taught me more about the economic and social history of those provinces than all I had read. An English friend who has re-visited my beloved Katikati, in the Bay of Plenty, writes to me: "Katikati looked so green and the mountains so blue—almost like Ireland, but how small has Ngatamahinerua become since I have seen the South Island!" For similar reasons a man from Otago and Canterbury should go to Auckland city and travel north as far as he can. The sea-broken land, with its languorous tree-fringed bays, will be another world to him.

My New Zealand is a tidal river in the North Island, mud-flats and mangroves; pohutukawas leaning over a blue summer sea; boys diving from their branches and launches nosing a way into their shade; a clay road cutting on a hot day, the tang of tea-tree in the air and cicadas droning through the pulsating heat;

woodsmoke mingling with the sweet, leaf-decaying smell of the bush, or the salt flavour of wet sand and seaweed; cities by the sea; a country town main street, with its line of wooden-verandaed shops in jumbled design, the whole rather like, I should say, a similar main street in Australia, Canada, or the United States; burnt trees standing or lying on a half-cleared bush farm; the white cliffs of the Rangitikei River seen from the Wellington-Auckland train; the Canterbury Plains and their horizon sweep of Alps from Cashmere Hills; the lovely pattern of down country south of Timaru; the fascinating hardness of Central Otago hills ("Oh, boy," cried an American marine, looking about him in Cromwell, "Colorado!"); Queenstown and its lake and peaks, the eye straying from the lawns and flowers of the gardens to the rock and snow of the Remarkables; a vista from the Lindis accommodation house, where there was not a tree to be seen on a world of tussock; the hot dry air of the southern nor'wester; picnicking in the bed of glacier rivers: little bits of untidy landscape (which the New Zealander longs for after a while amid the smoothness of England); desolate railway stations; remote farms.

The land is mine, all of it, beauty and ugliness, success and failure. The people are mine, all of them. A country is made by its people, not by its scenery. Men do not live on mountain-tops, though what they do to these may ruin economy. As I travel through New Zealand, swinging round the innumerable bends of sealed roads in the heart of the country, or look at photograph after photograph of scenery in our illustrated papers, or see acres of landscape in art exhibitions, I ask: "Where are the people?" Rather more than two million spread over a country a thousand miles long. To suppose that grand scenery necessarily inspires great art is a fallacy. The painters of Switzerland are inferior to those in Holland. So far as we know, Shakespeare never saw a snow mountain, and Burns did not come from the Highlands. As a rule artists prefer bits to panoramas, and often bits that seem to the uninitiated drab and dull. I think we may have too much grandeur and beauty in the contours of our country for the good of our souls. We may be too content with external beauty to the detriment of beauty within ourselves. Our mountain peaks, glaciers and lakes have become national symbols, but they are not so intimate as little things around us—a turn of the road, a clump of trees, an old house, a herd of cows stringing along for the evening milking, a shepherd and his dog.

What are we New Zealanders like, who inhabit what is, perhaps, for its size, the land most favoured by nature in all the world?

We spring mostly from a mongrel race, the English. The adjective is not derogatory, for mixed blood in the English is one of the sources of their strength. With the English there have come to New Zealand Scots, Welsh, Irish, French, Germans, Danes, Norwegians, Italians, Dalmatians and elements that may carry the scientific definition of "trace". Like the United States, we have sent the descendants of continental Europeans, including Germans, to help to redress the balance of that old world. Both my parents came from Ireland, but my mother's people originally belonged to the Scottish border, and my father's were Danish. Our most important non-British Isles admixture is one we do not consider sufficiently—the Maori. The original New Zealander is increasing faster than the European, but at least half of his people are of mixed blood. Inter-marriage has been common. Consider a story of an enforced deserter in the Maori wars as told by James Cowan. Enticed from his sentry duty by an attractive Maori girl with a kit of peaches for bait, he was seized and taken away by Maori men and compelled to become a pakeha-Maori. The capturing tribe gave him the girl for wife, and he had four others. He reckoned he had altogether thirty-five children.

It seems to be agreed that the Maori's destiny is to merge with the Europeans. How will this affect the New Zealand type? Physically we may become darker and heavier. I think it will put a bit of dash into us, as the Irish admixture has so often done with English blood. There are several resemblances between the Maori and the Irish. We shall be more romantic, more humorous, more care-free, and be drawn closer to the history and legends of our country. We shall speak more pleasantly, for here the Maori sets the European an example. We shall be less desperately serious about games, especially Rugby football. The Maori plays football as if he enjoyed it; the European New Zealander is inclined to make it a religious exercise. Celebrating at a smoke concert his team's victory in the senior competition in Auckland many years ago, a player declared that a man should go on to the field "prepared to meet his God", and when a dispute arose about the choice of a scrum-half for a tour of Britain an attempt was made to push it right up to the Prime Minister.

As the years pass the New Zealand type becomes more recognizable. I used to say an Englishman identified a New Zealander as such, largely by a process of elimination. He was not an Australian, or a Canadian, or a South African, therefore he was a New Zealander. Now, I believe, it is possible to recognize a New Zealander by his looks. He is leaner and more aquiline than the

Englishman, but bigger, and his skin is browner. His face is harder; the chubby countenance is rare. This is a land of much wind as well as much sun, and the combination roughens the skin. His expression is generally quiet, and especially if he is a countryman, there is often something in his eyes that suggests the faraway look of the sailor. His landscape views are long. Moreover, he lives in remote islands, and as he gazes out over the ocean, he knows that the greater world is very far away beyond the horizon. So many of his thoughts are projected and perhaps this is reflected in his expression.

What sort of man is he inside? All communities have need to bear in mind Chesterton's remarks on patriotism in that best of all volumes of literary criticism in our time, his *Charles Dickens*. He describes as "essential madness", "the idea that a good patriot is the man who feels at ease about his own country". "In the eighteenth century, in the making of modern politics, a 'patriot' meant a discontented man." Like the English, my countrymen make me sad and mad and glad. They are honest, industrious, dependable, adaptable, kind, helpful and courageous—first-class folk in a tight corner of their own or others' making. Friendliness is a common quality. New Zealanders will talk to anyone anywhere, and are ready to come quickly and cheerfully to the aid of a stranger. Their sense of equality and fraternity is very strong, stronger than their sense of liberty. Neither their humour nor their wit is remarkable. They are disposed to treat platitudes with undeserved respect, almost to salute them, which is one reason why the standard of public speaking is so low.

New Zealanders are still adolescents. This is not surprising, for the Americans, a much older people, are the same. We resent criticism, and combine boasting about what we have done with lack of appreciation of it. I have a touch of this touchiness myself. When I see someone pouring over New Zealanders the same old stale butter of praise (Chesterton again)—what a wonderful people we are, how splendidly our democracy works, and the way we lead the world—I want to say something rude. However, when some visitor complains, for example, that our railways are not so comfortable as his own, I also want to protest. Will he please compare conditions? Is it reasonable to expect in a community of two million people all the amenities provided by and for fifty or a hundred and fifty millions? An English visitor said our North Island Main Trunk express was "invariably late". Having had to meet the train from time to time, I knew it was not, and departmental figures showed that, all things considered, including

country higher and much more difficult than English trains have to cross, the percentage of punctuality was creditable. The best analysis of the New Zealander is in Oliver Duff's Centennial survey, *New Zealand Now*, and I cannot hope to equal it. We have inherited the English dislike of thinking. "We follow our instincts, trust our emotions, mistrust theory. So we mistrust, and even fear, men who march to strange music." Our soldiers are lions in battle (these words are my own), but in the world of ideas and in social habits we are rather timid and docile. We may put this down to our youth and size as well as to our origins. We are rather like a small town where everybody knows everybody and watches everybody. However, time goes on. Duff's *New Zealand Now* is already some years old, and we move.

New Zealanders should not be unmindful of their achievements over a little more than a hundred years: the breaking in of a country and the development of a trade that gives one of the highest per-head figures in the world; an exceptionally high and relatively even standard of living; one of the lowest death-rates; a society without rigid classes; opportunity for education "in widest commonalty spread"; care for the under-paid, the under-privileged and the unfortunate, in a system of social security that has attracted wide attention; success of sons and daughters in the competition of larger societies, and in contributions of great value to mankind; the beginnings of a native literature and art; and in two world wars a magnificent record in recruiting and fighting. Martial virtues can co-exist with unlikable qualities. If one could be transported to ancient Greece, one would not choose Sparta for a home. Courage, however, is the foundation of all the virtues. In the story of the New Zealanders in these two wars, off the field as well as on it, there is proof of the fine stuff in the young nation—its valour, its independence and initiative, its powers of endurance, its self-control, good temper and friendliness.

The exploits of Lieutenant (later Captain) Charles Hazlitt Upham, the only combatant soldier to win a Bar to the Victoria Cross, are remarkable even among the records of that decoration. What he did in Crete to win the Cross was spread over a number of engagements. Here are passages in the citation:

During operations in Crete Second-Lieutenant Upham performed a series of remarkable exploits showing outstanding leadership, tactical skill, and utter indifference to danger. He commanded a forward platoon on the attack on Malemi on May 2nd, and fought his way forward over 3000 yards unsupported by any other arms against a defence strongly organised in depth. During the operation his platoon destroyed numerous enemy

posts, but on three occasions the sections were temporarily held up. In the first case, under heavy fire from a machine gun nest, he advanced to close quarters with pistol and grenades, so demoralising the occupants that his section was able to mop up with ease. Another of his sections was then held up by two machine guns in a house. Upham went in and placed grenades through a window, destroying the crew of one machine gun and several others, the other machine gun being silenced by the fire of his section. In a third case he crawled within fifteen yards of a machine gun post and killed gunners with a grenade. When his company withdrew from Malemi, Upham helped to carry wounded men out of fire, and together with another officer, rallied more men together to carry other men out.

At Galatos on May 25th, his platoon was heavily engaged, when the troops in front gave way and came under a severe mortar and machine gun fire. While the platoon stopped under cover of a ridge Upham went forward, observed the enemy, and brought up a platoon when the Germans advanced. They killed forty Germans with fire and grenade, forcing the remainder to fall back. When the platoon was ordered to retire Upham sent it back under a platoon sergeant, and Upham went back to warn other troops that they were cut off. When he came out himself, he was fired on by two Germans. He fell and shammed dead, then crawled into position, and, having use of only one arm, rested his rifle in the fork of a tree. As the Germans came forward he killed both. The second German actually hit the muzzle of his rifle as he fell.

All through this fighting, said General Kippenberger, Upham was suffering from dysentery, and was "practically a skeleton". He won the Bar to the Cross in North Africa for "outstanding gallantry and magnificent leadership". Again he knew just what to do in a crisis, and did it immediately with the same complete indifference to danger. Put out of action by a wound, he insisted on going back, and in the end was captured with a handful of survivors. Upham is one of the most modest of men. He did not want to wear the ribbon of his V.C. When I met him I was struck by this quality, but I have never seen a man from whom personality shone more unmistakably.

A division of officers, was an English observer's impression of the New Zealand Division in the second war. The best he had seen, was the opinion of Field-Marshal Alexander, who had the division in his command. "That ball of fire," said Mr Churchill! New Zealanders were as brave and competent at sea and in the air as on the land. "It is calculated," said Leonard Brockington, K.C., at that time the Adviser on Commonwealth Affairs to the British Ministry of Information, in a broadcast during the war, that if the airmen of New Zealand could be assembled together they could launch one of the R.A.F.'s famous thousand-

bomber raids—fighter protection, ground service and all.” When my son, John Mulgan, who joined the British Army because he was living in Oxford, met his countrymen in North Africa, he found them quiet, shrewd and sceptical. “They had confidence in themselves, such as New Zealanders rarely have [so he wrote in his posthumous book *Report on Experience*], knowing themselves as good as the best the world could bring against them, like a football team in a more deadly game, coherent, practical, successful. Everything that was good from that small remote country had gone into them—sunshine and strength, good sense, patience, the versatility of practical men. And they marched into history.”

The warmest and most moving praise of us that I have read or heard, comes from the Canadian Leonard Brockington. He visited us during the war, and must have won all hearts; he certainly won mine. This country he called “the clean and lovely land of the faithful”. Must we decline to cherish praise because we feel it is not merited? Rather should we take it to our hearts and pray that it will sharpen our intelligence, strengthen our will, and deepen our humility. For the easy half-blind days have gone. If this country is to solve its problems it will need fundamental brain-stuff based on faith and courage. The very soil of our country calls out for better treatment from heart and hand. The Far East is no longer a vast, distant, mysterious collection of human hives among which the British flag was planted here and there. It has become the Nearer North, and we have to consider how much danger it portends and how much co-operation it invites. Some years ago a young American poet, Paul Engel, told his countrymen they had to pass from pioneering the land to another task. There was a second land to be explored, “the deep spirituality of men”. As time passes, the excuse that New Zealanders are preoccupied with pioneering in the primary sense of the word, loses more and more force.

My personal final word is that in politics I am a Liberal with leanings to the left—“left” with a small “I”. However, when I say I want to see New Zealand Liberal, I am not thinking of politics but of a state of mind. I am a democrat, for two reasons, because the definition of faith itself applies to democracy—the determination to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis—and because I see no satisfactory alternative. I dislike the taut and quivering idealism that is always on the stretch, and the intrusion of propaganda into everything. I dislike short cuts. I am not at

ease about the demands science is making on education. Chemistry and physics are very necessary subjects of study, but can they ever by themselves teach us to love and understand our fellow men, give us liberality, pity and grace? Without nourishment by the humanities, these flowers must wither. Holding these convictions, I detest totalitarianism and all its works. It sins against the light. Its first victim is always truth. I wish for my country nothing so much as the cultivation of the open mind.



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## THE AUTHOR

*The Making of a New Zealander* is the latest book from Alan Mulgan, an active and versatile writer, whose books have been published both in London and New Zealand.

*Home*, a record of his visit to England, was warmly praised there and in other parts of the Commonwealth, and was reprinted in the Swan Library. *First With the Sun* was a collection of his essays, most of which were originally written under the pen-name "Cyrano". His verses have been widely read. The longest of them, the narrative poem "Golden Wedding", which Eileen Duggan says "breathes New Zealand", was recorded for the New Zealand Broadcasting Service by Barbara Jefford, the English actress.

Alan Mulgan collaborated with Professor Walter Murdoch in editing *A Book of Australian and New Zealand Verse*, and his one-act plays have been staged in Australia as well as in New Zealand. One of his histories is *The City of the Strait*, the centennial history of Wellington. A chapter of his novel of New Zealand political and social life, *Spur of Morning*, has been chosen for a forthcoming English anthology.

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